THE UPPER GUINEA COAST IN GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

EDITED BY
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The Upper Guinea Coast in Global Perspective

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In Memoriam

This book is dedicated to the memory of Christian Kordt Højbjerg (1961–2014).

Christian was an associate professor at the University of Aarhus (Denmark) and a long-time member of the research group 'Integration and Conflict along the Upper Guinea Coast' at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology in Halle (Saale), Germany.

After studying at the University of Aarhus, Christian did graduate work at the École des Hautes Études en Sciences Sociales before obtaining his Ph.D. and his Habilitation in anthropology at the University of Copenhagen. His areas of specialization included Guinea, Liberia, Sierra Leone, Côte d'Ivoire and Mauritius. He published extensively on a range of subjects, including historical memory, ritual and social organization, conflict and emergent political orders, identity and difference, and the role of reflexivity in shaping both social change and theoretical change.

Throughout his work, Christian demonstrated mastery of many skills: he was a dedicated ethnographer, a critical and in-depth analyst, an inspirational teacher, a compassionate man and a fine scholar with an open and active mind. As a member of our research group, Christian made a great and valuable contribution to our work. We have lost a wonderful friend and colleague whom we will miss and keep in our hearts and minds as an inspiration for our lives and research.

On behalf of all contributors to this book and the members, associates and friends of the Research Group 'Integration and Conflict along the Upper Guinea Coast' at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology,

Jacqueline Knörr and Christoph Kohl

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Introduction

The Upper Guinea Coast in Global Perspective

Jacqueline Knörr and Christoph Kohl

For centuries, the Upper Guinea Coast region of West Africa has been characterized by connections and interactions with societies and thought worlds in various parts of Africa and beyond. This book explores these regional and global encounters and exchanges, and points to the disruptions and continuities they caused as well as to the region's influences on other parts of the world. Its chapters focus on the region's entanglements with different societies, entanglements triggered by the expansion of colonialism, the Atlantic slave trade and, more recently, densifying transnational networks and increased global interaction – processes and institutions that are interconnected and interdependent in manifold ways. Authors investigate various aspects of the Upper Guinea Coast's connections with societies in Africa, Asia, the Americas and Europe as well as the region's exposure to external orders and value systems, including resulting creative adaptations and transformations. While historical perspectives are employed, this volume focuses primarily on current developments and present-day effects of historical interactions.

The notion 'Upper Guinea Coast', as it is understood here, follows Walter Rodney's (1970) influential monograph *A History of the Upper Guinea Coast, 1545–1800.* It refers to a littoral West African region that stretches from present-day Senegal in the north to the western part of Côte d'Ivoire, including the Cape Verdean archipelago. Thus, it entirely or partially covers the territories of Gambia, Senegal, Guinea-Bissau, Guinea, Sierra Leone, Liberia and Cape Verde. As elaborated in Knörr and Trajano Filho (2010: 2), we conceptualize the Upper Guinea Coast as a 'primarily geographic label that helps us to place and correlate historical, cultural, linguistic, and social phenomena and processes in regional terms'. Besides their physical contiguity, the parts of the region are characterized by many similarities, from social and cultural forms and institutions to historical experiences, political structures and specificities concerning modes of social and societal interaction and processes of integration and conflict (Knörr and Trajano Filho 2010: 2–10).

The headings of the following sections reflect our focus on four major dimensions of the Upper Guinea Coast's global connectedness: 'Creole Connections', 'Diasporic Entanglements', 'Travelling Models' and 'Interregional Integration'. Combining anthropological and historical perspectives, we look at the social interactions, societal and political conditions, and historical contexts of the Upper Guinea Coast's global connectedness, thereby trying to capture contemporary globalization in this particular region of the world in its synchronic and diachronic relations and complexities.

Creole Connections

Trans-Saharan trade networks (see Austen 2010) have linked littoral commercial hubs with Africa's interior for centuries. They contributed to the spread of Islam and expansion of Mandingo and, later on, Fula domination over parts of the region, entailing both religious and ethnic conversions and migrations (Person 1968–1975; Robinson 1985; Gaillard 2000). Coastal trading posts founded by the Portuguese and Cape Verdeans have linked Europe with the Upper Guinea Coast and Africa's interior since the late fifteenth century. By also opening new ('third') spaces for European-African encounters, these entrepôts fostered the emergence of Luso-Creole culture and identities (including Luso-Creole language varieties and localized forms of Christianity) (Mark 2002; Brooks 2003; Havik 2004). 'Eurafricans' (Brooks 2003) often functioned as intermediaries in economic, social and cultural interaction and exchange. In many cases they were also involved in the slave trade that connected West Africa with the Americas and Europe (see e.g. Green 2012; cf. Lahon 1999; Rodrigues 1999). The Upper Guinea Coast (Cape Verde, the Gambia, Sierra Leone and Liberia) was not only a slave hub but also a final destination for slaves and freed slaves. Mark and da Silva Horta (2011) have recently shown the outcomes these historic networks had in the Upper Guinea Coast region, outcomes that included resilience as well as the constant reshaping of identities and alliances. However, Upper Guinea's relationships were not exclusive to the 'Atlantic World' (Falola and Roberts 2008). Rather, the Upper Guinea Coast also served as a transit station for European colonizers and their concepts en route to Asia. Christoph Kohl picks up this finding in this volume. Taking the examples of Guinea-Bissau and Sri Lanka, he investigates how Portugal's maritime expansion led to the emergence of Luso-Creole groups and languages along the Upper Guinea Coast, the Gulf of Guinea, and South and South-East Asia. The latter shared Portuguese features that were adapted in various ways to respond to the given local needs and interests (cf. Alpers 2012).

The end of the Atlantic slave trade in the Upper Guinea Coast region was due not least to the activities of British and American philanthropists and abolitionists (cf. Everill 2013). From the late eighteenth century onward, freed slaves were 'returned' from the Americas and England to settle in Sierra Leone and

Liberia. Many Africans were rescued from slave vessels bound for the Americas and came to live along the Upper Guinea Coast (Peterson 1969; Shick 1980). Hence, in most parts of the Upper Guinea Coast, creole groups and categories of people emerged against colonial and philanthropic backdrops. Their interaction among themselves as well as with local populations led to the emergence of new identities and sociocultural practices and institutions incorporating features of their respective backgrounds. These populations – such as the Luso-Creole categories of people in Guinea-Bissau, the Krio of Sierra Leone, the Aku of the Gambia, the Americo-Liberians and the citizens of the 'quatre communes'[1] in Senegal – forged intra- and interethnic as well as regional and transnational ties to ensure their own reproduction and to gain and maintain social, economic and political influence. They incorporated people of heterogeneous origins from Africa, Europe and the Americas and have often served as intermediaries between peoples of different ethnic, cultural and regional backgrounds. Depending on social and political demands, they distinguished themselves from the indigenous local populations by stressing their relative European-ness or emphasizing the African dimension of their identity to strengthen links with local populations and power holders, not least by marrying women of local descent (Liebenow 1969; Knörr 1995, 2010b; Trajano Filho 1998; Hughes and Perfect 2006; Jones 2013). As Bruce Mouser shows in his contribution on Eurafrican families in the Rio Pongo area of Guinea, creolization also resulted in the establishment of local families who, having integrated into host societies, identified with both their respective local residence and their American or European background. Starting in the late eighteenth century, transcontinental merchants originating in the United States and Great Britain established factories in the Rio Pongo area. Their limited number and dispersal throughout the area facilitated their gradual integration into local kin networks and power structures characterized by landlord-stranger relationships (cf. Sarró 2009).

Depending on their social contextualization in a given historical situation, creole groups or sections among them have enjoyed elevated status and privileged lifestyles, or suffered ridicule and discrimination, as the result of their being heterogeneous, (relatively) foreign in origin and more or less distant from (more) native populations (Knörr 1995, 2009a, 2010a, 2010b; cf. Kopytoff 1987; Eriksen 2002; Geschiere 2009). More often than not, despite their numerical inferiority and often ambivalent status, creole populations managed to play influential roles in different sectors of public life in both colonial and postcolonial times. In Guinea-Bissau, for example, creoles were major figures in the battle for independence and in the conceptual implementation and political realization of the postcolonial nation state (Trajano Filho 1998; Havik 2004; Kohl 2009, 2011). As elsewhere, they have also contributed significantly to the respective national culture through the languages they speak. In both Guinea-Bissau and Sierra Leone, creole languages have become lingua francas that are mastered by (almost)

everyone, thereby functioning as a means of interethnic communication and transethnic and national identification and integration (cf. Vikør 2004).

The chapters by Bruce Mouser, Nathanial King and Christoph Kohl show that conditions in the Upper Guinea Coast region often facilitated the integration of creole features into social, cultural and political repertoires. Nonetheless, creole groups have often triggered conflict in relation to exclusionary discourses and policies. Nathaniel King's contribution explores how marginalized groups and individuals have appropriated so-called secret societies in Freetown for the past six decades. A culture of secrecy is ubiquitous in Sierra Leone, and in Freetown secret societies used to function as a means of social status reproduction by the Krio group (Cohen 1971, 1981). In recent years noncreole and transethnic secret societies have emerged in Freetown as urban counter-institutions. Their members are mainly marginalized urban youths and adults using proclaimed Yoruba (hence, Nigerian) origins and related ritual practices as strategic means to increase their social and symbolic powers as well as their political influence.

The contributions in this volume illustrate that whether creole groups and identities play divisive or integrative roles largely depends on their social contextualization within society at large.

Diasporic Entanglements

Throughout its history the Upper Guinea Coast has produced and received diasporas, whose narratives of common origins and destinies constitute a vital dimension of their members' identities. Slave communities of Upper Guinea Coast origin lived in Portugal (cf. Lahon 1999), in South America (cf. Tardieu 2001) and in the Caribbean (Morgan 2011). The notion of diaspora has been discussed controversially. However, at least three identifiable analytical core criteria are widely believed to be constitutive of diasporas. First, most agree that dispersion in space is one crucial element – despite the fact that the division of ethnic communities by state borders may also be a salient criterion. Second, diasporas entail a homeland orientation, though in some cases diasporas are not oriented towards their ancestral homeland. Third, boundary maintenance occurs over an extended time period, albeit boundary erosion is an important feature of diasporas, too. This analytical understanding contrasts with 'diaspora' conceptualized as a substantialized category of practice, serving as a mobilizing, even political vehicle (Brubaker 2005).

Early diasporic entanglements in the Upper Guinea Coast region were prompted by the expansion of the Mandingo and Fula empires. European traders' early settlement along the West African coast and subsequent European colonial penetration of the interior resulted in colonial migrant diasporas. With independence came temporary development workers, diplomats and 'expatriates'. Vice versa, the (former) European colonial metropolises as well as the United States

and Canada attracted migrants from the Upper Guinea Coast. In recent decades, armed conflicts have produced new categories of forced migrants – refugees and 'internally displaced persons' – who sometimes turn into more or less permanent diasporas. Diasporic relations include personal and political ties as well as the exchange of people, money, goods and ideas. They entail networks between individuals and groups, families and nation states, family-run enterprises and consortiums. Diasporic entanglements – patterns of exchange and interaction between 'diaspora' and 'home' – are manifold and multifaceted.

Most studies dealing with diasporas focus on the diasporas as such but less so on their interactions with relatives and friends left behind at 'home'. Recent research has turned attention to diasporas' countries and societies of origin, stressing the perceptions, expectations and relationships that migrants experienced in their homeland societies. For instance, a recurring pattern concerns the social status paradoxes of African migration diasporas in the Global North: migrants who enjoyed high prestige in their homelands must now endure low social status in the countries of the Global North, as many of them work at unskilled jobs (Nieswand 2011). Against this background, the chapters by Anita Schroven and Heike Drotbohm are dedicated to the repercussions diasporic communities must confront at 'home' and to the contestations and negotiations their (diasporic) roles are subjected to. Anita Schroven analyses the perception of the Guinean transnational community's engagement in both local and national politics 'back home' in Guinea. In doing so, she focuses on transnationals not as agents but as objects of (Guinean) discourses. Heike Drotbohm analyses the interaction between resident islanders and cognate visiting migrants from the United States, who meet during an annual patron saint festivity in Cape Verde. She points to commonalities, such as shared beliefs and origins, and to differences as well, like socioeconomic inequalities in the diaspora's 'home'. As a major hub for slave ships bound for the New World, Cape Verde was among the places that played a crucial role for the slave trade; the resulting dissemination of Upper Guinean social, cultural and even agricultural models (cf. Carney 2001; Fields-Black 2008; Hawthorne 2010) and, consequently, in the making of the 'Black Atlantic' (Gilroy 1993). More recently, the slave trade gave way to more or less voluntary migration, turning the impoverished archipelago into an early migrant labour reservoir par excellence. To this day, young Cape Verdeans search for jobs abroad in North America, Europe and other former Portuguese colonies in Africa. Both forced and voluntary migration have sustainably influenced social relationships and contributed to the proliferation and reconfiguration of cultural practices and values, both within the archipelago and across continents. This makes Cape Verde a transnational society per se. Drotbohm shows both the ongoing home 'rootedness' of migrants and resident islanders' interest in reproducing relationships with influential migrants that hold promise for attaining prestige through the distribution of functions and resources.

By contrast, Markus Rudolf discusses ways of making diasporas within a country. His study focuses on the case of Senegal, where 'nordistes' – inhabitants of the northern part of the country, including the capital Dakar – and Casamançais originating from the country's southernmost region, which has been shattered by violent conflict for decades, maintain discourses that construct each other as diasporas in the respective counterpart's territory. In this way, concepts frequently used when discussing diasporas, like 'country of origin' and 'recipient' country or society, become blurred and contested.

Pedro F. Marcelino's essay examines the perception and stereotyping of various diasporic communities by members of the host society. Over the past decades, Cape Verde has (re-)transformed into a country that attracts migrants. The archipelago has been characterized by inward and outward migration since its colonization in the late fifteenth century, and the resulting heterogeneity led to multiple processes of creolization that made diasporic peoples of European and African descent into Cape Verdeans. As a consequence, it is widely assumed that Cape Verdean creoleness has always been reproduced by integrating culture and identities of different origins. Marcelino questions this assumption, arguing that Cape Verdeans' attitudes towards immigrants depend on a set of interrelated markers; hence, the varying 'attractiveness' of different diasporic communities relates to different degrees of integration, implying different extents of the respective boundary maintenance and boundary erosion.

Travelling Models

After the official termination of the Sierra Leonean Civil War in 2002, a Special Court for Sierra Leone was set up by the Sierra Leonean government and the United Nations to bring individuals responsible for war crimes to justice (Anders 2009). Simultaneously – and as in other postwar countries like Liberia and Guinea-Bissau – peace-building programmes devoting attention to former child soldiers and ex-combatants were established conjointly by the Sierra Leonean government, the United Nations, the international community, development agencies and nongovernmental organizations (NGOs). The norms and values guiding these peace-building initiatives have functioned as global 'travelling models' that compete with more local practices and beliefs concerning the (re-)establishment of peace and order (Knörr and Trajano Filho 2010; Knörr 2010b). Following actor-network theory, as developed by Bruno Latour (2005), and organizational sociology approaches (e.g. Czarniawska and Joerges 1996), 'travelling models' are conceived as ideas and practices that are transferred into diverging social, cultural, political and geographic settings, where they are recontextualized, hence embedded and translated into new contexts (see e.g. Merry 2006; cf. Knörr 2007, 2014). Such travelling ideas and practices (i.e. narrative structures; trains of thought; beliefs; programmes; legal and normative orders) may become

materialized in printed documents, pictures, artefacts or voyagers, amongst others. In their new context or 'web of belief' (Quine and Ullian 1978) 'travelling models' are subject to innovations and transformations that involve processes of 'translation' (Kaufmann and Rottenburg 2012) and '"*de*-strangement" of the external culture via its (meaningful) incorporation into what is familiar' (cf. Knörr's [2007: 33] elaborations on the '*Ent*-fremdung des Fremden'; Knörr 2014). Such processes of translation, transformation and de-strangement impact both the (travelling) ideas and practices as such and the contexts from which they originated and into which they are incorporated.

For centuries European presence was limited to relatively small coastal settlements along the Upper Guinea Coast. Only from the early nineteenth century onwards did colonial penetration of the hinterland get under way, whereupon old and new colonial powers alike tried to impose their respective ideological models of colonization and domination, which had in common the belief in European supremacy. The emerging colonial orders introduced techniques to control, subjugate and divide indigenous populations, leading to reconfigurations of political structures, alliances and identifications, and to new waves of migrations within the region (see Galli and Jones 1987; van der Laan 1992). At the same time, reward systems created new prospects of social upward mobility for some sections of colonial society, whose members adapted to its demands to varying degrees. European colonial metropolises became increasingly attractive in terms of educational and economic opportunities. Hence, earlier patterns of West Africans' presence in cities like London ('Black Poor') and Lisbon (Braidwood 1994; Rodrigues 1999) continued, yet were transformed.

Formal European education contributed to the spread of 'undesired' anti-colonial and nationalist ideologies among the emerging African middle class, among them many members of creole minorities. Writings such as those of the Caribbean-born Americo-Liberian Edward Wilmot Blyden (cf. Tibebu 2012), the African-American pan-Africanist and civil rights activist W.E.B. du Bois (du Bois 2012) and Jamaican Marcus Garvey (see Grant 2009) were received favourably among intellectual circles in the region (and beyond). Pan-Africanist and proto-nationalist movements – some of them branches of metropolitan organizations – led by members of the educated African middle class served as models of modern nationhood from about 1910 onwards. Postcolonial state ideology built heavily on material and ideological support from communist and socialist states in Eastern Europe and Asia. In Guinea, Guinea-Bissau and Cape Verde, nationalist leaders referred to the modernist and socialist models of governance in vogue at the time (Cabral 1976, 1977; Diallo 1990). As in other parts of the postcolonial world, many political leaders in the Upper Guinea Coast region adapted the classic French model of nationhood that equates state, nation and culture (see Gellner 1998; Hobsbawm 1999). However, they had to cope with the facts that in their case – and unlike the European ideal type of nationhood –

state building had preceded nation-building, and postcolonial society remained characterized by ethnic diversity and allegiances. This challenge prompted some leaders, for instance Amílcar Cabral (1976), leader of Guinea-Bissau's dominant independence movement, to adjust the European nation-building concept to postcolonial conditions by providing it with a 'unity-in-diversity' dimension that conceives of the nation as an umbrella covering the various ethnic groups living on the respective national territory. Vice versa, this model tends to conceptualize ethnic groups and identities as the respective nation's roots, without which the latter cannot unfold (see Anderson 1999; Kymlicka 2004; Young 2004; Knörr 2007, 2008, 2009b).

The former colonial powers continued to have a major impact on postcolonial developments. Independence went along with the provision of development co-operation programmes that reflected both hegemonic and philanthropic motives – prominently involving the former colonial powers – against the background of the East-West conflict. While both political camps sought to disseminate their supposedly superior ideologies, African leaders adapted them to local conditions as well as their own political needs. Initially, development cooperation likewise followed modernist and neo-Marxist approaches, aiming to reproduce the European and North American unilateral path towards economic development and industrialization in the Upper Guinea Coast region and elsewhere in the so-called Third World.

Colonial domination, development aid, economic structural adjustment and international law, along with security and peace-building reforms, in- and out-ward migration, and the expansion of media technologies, have all influenced societies in the Upper Guinea Coast region (and beyond) through concepts, ideas and practices related to and travelling with them. However, these flows are not unidirectional from the North to the South but rather proceed in a zig-zag fashion whose travel itinerary often is not traceable, as organization theory (Czarniawska and Joerges 1996) has emphasized.

In his contribution, Wilson Trajano Filho traces the transatlantic semantic journey of the word *tabanka,* showing that origins other than Upper Guinean ones are conceivable since similar words exist in Angola, Congo, Central Africa, Hispanic America and the French-speaking Caribbean. The analysis shows that tracing the origins of travelling words and meanings is often highly speculative, if not impossible. The chapter may also be read as a warning against simple linear source-recipient transfer models (cf. Djelic 2008).

The Upper Guinea Coast has been integrated into global networks for centuries, but the quality of its globalization has changed in recent times. The role of nonstate actors – notably supranational, transnational and economic organizations (e.g. nongovernmental institutions and enterprises) – has increased, as has the number of new actors from countries of the Global South, such as China

and Brazil. Employment and education opportunities in the Americas, Europe and Asia in combination with new and improved communication and transport networks have enabled growing numbers of Upper Guineans to keep in (virtual) touch with other parts of the world and to travel abroad. Nonetheless, the Global North's exercise of power by disseminating values and ideas often coined as 'Western' sometimes provokes resistance to what are perceived as acts of 'cultural imperialism' and 'neocolonialism', even as Western lifestyles, consumer goods, media and education attract people in the Global South and challenge local ways and traditions of (re-)structuring social, political and economic life. As Latour (2005), Kaufmann and Rottenburg (2012) and theorists of globalization like Appadurai (1996) and Hannerz (2002) have underlined, such travelling models are translated in ways that fit the local sociocultural contexts into which they are integrated, a process Robertson (1995) termed 'glocalization' (cf. Knörr 2002, 2009a, 2010a, 2014).

Increasing criticism of the failure of many development projects that came to be known as 'white elephants' clearly illustrated that models that had succeeded in the Global North could not simply be applied one-to-one in African contexts. The exacerbation of debt crisis and the resulting Washington Consensus in the 1980s[2] exposed the Upper Guinea Coast region to even more economic and fiscal interventions by supranational institutions like the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and the World Bank, which pushed economic reforms that in many cases led to deregulation policies and aggravated socioeconomic disparities.

Joanna Davidson's chapter presents an example of nontranslation of Global North concepts. On the basis of her field research in Northern Guinea-Bissau, she discusses the sociocultural, political, economic and ecological dimensions of insufficient rice cultivation among the Diola against the backdrop of climate change. Besides telling the story of international actors' neglect and disregard of the sociocultural and political embedding of rice cultivation, Davidson points to the nontranslation of technology, that is, to development research schemes oriented to social engineering (see Scott 1998). Her chapter on the global warming-induced changes in rice growing contributes to the understanding of how international professionals' planning largely ignores local sociocultural patterns, expectations and demands while employing large-scale Global North technologies believed to be superior and in no need of adaptation to local contexts.

Following the model set by the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission since the mid 1990s, 'local' solutions to resolve postconflict situations and reconcile offenders and victims have come into vogue, in line with international norm-setting agencies' (e.g. the UN's and OECD's) demands for increased 'local ownership' (see Donais 2009). This global discourse and its local manifestation are tackled by William P. Murphy in this volume. Dealing with the return of refugees and internally displaced people in postconflict Liberia and

Sierra Leone, he confronts the international discourse of postconflict reconciliation with conflicting local expectations and ideas of social justice. Murphy points to the problematic fact that both the Sierra Leone Truth and Reconciliation Commission[3] and international law more generally tend to identify individuals as those responsible for war crimes without addressing the existing neopatrimonial institutional structures of injustice as a whole. Again, international reconciliatory approaches, discourses and practices do not seem to be well translated into local contexts. Similar observations pertain to other realms of Sierra Leone's postwar society. Supra- and transnational actors engaged in supporting the country's media sector with an eye to strengthening civic rights often fail to adequately take local conditions into consideration and 'translate' their approaches and concepts accordingly, a topic dealt with by Sylvanus Spencer in this volume. Since the establishment of peace a decade ago, the right to freedom of expression has turned into a contested space, or even a 'battleground', in postwar Sierra Leone. Spencer shows that transnational organizations involved in the discourse focus on the formal legal system and fail to consider customary law in the interior, thereby ignoring the effects of the bifurcate legal system. Another translational weakness he identifies is that civic education programmes promoting freedom of expression are unaware of cultural obstacles to talking freely, such as the culture of secrecy so prominent in most parts of the Upper Guinea Coast region (cf. King 2012).

Another issue that has drawn much attention from both scholars and development workers is that of youth and warfare in Upper Guinea Coast societies. Following, amongst others, Ellis' (1999) monograph on religious dimensions of youths' involvement in the Liberian war and works by Utas (2003), Shepler (2005) and Coulter (2009) on former youth combatants, as well as Vigh's (2006) publication on youth and soldiering in Guinea-Bissau's 'military conflict', Susan Shepler's contribution examines the global flow of child protection models, challenging – as do Murphy and Spencer – the widely accepted view that expertise trickles from the top down, that is, from the Global North to various peripheries in the South, a view that implies that local agents are bound to their locations, as Merry (2006), for instance, assumed. Expertise, Shepler concludes, is mainly about introducing a new expert language that fixes Sierra Leoneans in a hierarchical position, tacitly implying that they did not previously know how to take care of children. As in Murphy's case, a North-South power asymmetry becomes apparent where international NGOs seek 'traditional' child healing rituals that may well exist in other settings, but not in Sierra Leone. Such asymmetries also exist where child protection organizations commodify former child soldiers in order to attract funds. However, local Sierra Leoneans are not mere powerless objects of a top-down trickle of ideas. They learn the 'newspeak' of child expertise to take advantage of project activities and build careers within the international 'child

protection expertise' sector as 'locals' assumed to be experts on 'local contexts' anywhere in the Global South.

Interregional Integration

State borders between West African countries are relatively young, dating back to the last quarter of the nineteenth century. People in the Upper Guinea Coast region have maintained contacts with their neighbours across these borders ever since they were drawn. They often have much in common in terms of ethnic identities, cultural features and historical experience. However, identification with the respective nation states has grown due to social, cultural, political and linguistic commonalities that developed out of specific colonial and postcolonial circumstances and experiences. Ethnic groups identify with 'their' nation-state to varying degrees, and some ethnic identities correspond to a given national identity more than others do (Højbjerg, Knörr and Kohl 2012; Knörr and Trajano Filho 2010). Ethnic or local identities may also be situated in opposition to the nation-state, as in the case of the Casamançais, mentioned above. The Mandingos and the Fulas are examples of ethnic groups that are scattered over a handful of West African states and maintain particular, regionalized sub-identifications while also identifying with their respective nation-state. Research has demonstrated how colonially drawn interstate borders in West Africa have, in the long run, shaped perceptions of belonging (cf. Nugent 2008). Against these backgrounds, Christian K. Højbjerg investigates the role of Mandingo identity in local conflicts in the border triangle of Guinea, Liberia and Sierra Leone, where, as he concludes, common war experiences have led to a simplification of people's consciousness of processes related to Mandingo identity. Outbreaks of violence in the respective countries have often been attributed to a strengthening of transnational Mandingo identity and Mandingo expansion into new areas where they come into conflict with first-come ethnic groups (cf. Kopytoff 1987). This makes ethnic loyalties and differences responsible for what are often designated as 'ethnic clashes' (against this view, see Schlee 2008; Donahoe et al. 2009). According to Højbjerg, however, (transnational) Mandingo identity has strengthened only during the protracted wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia, which prompted 'taking sides' and a stronger ethnic consciousness among Mandingos (and possibly other groups) on the one hand, and a coarsening and weakening of peaceful conflict resolution mechanisms on the other. Colonization not only created new territory-related, protonational points of reference but also fostered transcolonial relationships that have given rise to specific transnational identifications and networks. For example, Sierra Leone and the Gambia were both British colonies. Sierra Leone, the Gambia and Liberia are linked by the settlement of different groups of liberated slaves and also share their official language. Today, air links

between these three countries are relatively frequent, and connecting flights exist to other anglophone countries in West Africa, namely Ghana and Nigeria. Flying directly from Sierra Leone or Liberia to Guinea-Bissau, however, is impossible, despite the proximity. Flight schedules, it seems, reflect the intensity of mutual contact and exchange among the inhabitants of the respective nation-states.

Thus, as this case exemplifies, colonial boundaries have produced new (transethnic) identifications with the given colonial territory, laying the foundation for the postcolonial nation-states, but ethnic identifications and differences have nonetheless prevailed. The emerging identifications with newly created colonial territories were paralleled by emergent transcolonial identifications within the respective colonial empires that were based on shared (colonial) history and language, family ties, educational backgrounds, cultural representations and so on.

Internal socioeconomic disparities as well as social and political exclusion were among the causes of the wars that broke out in different countries within the region from the 1980s onwards (Richards 1996; Ellis 1999; Coulter 2009). However, these wars also had distinct regional and global dimensions. The Sierra Leonean Civil War was sparked by Charles Taylor's rebels entering the country from Liberia and also affected neighbouring Guinea and Côte d'Ivoire. Both the bordering Guinea-Bissau and Gambia have reportedly been involved in the Casamance conflict, and in 1998/99 Senegal, Guinea and France engaged in Guinea-Bissau's civil war (e.g. van der Drift 1999; Rodrigues and Guillerme 2005).

The societies of the Upper Guinea Coast were transnationally and globally connected well before and during the respective wars. In her contribution, Alice Bellagamba uncovers mid-twentieth-century transnational trade relationships and the establishment of neopatrimonial networks both within the region and beyond by examining the life story of a Gambian diamond dealer – a scion of a precolonial Senegambian Mandingo trading elite of Malian origin. She describes how this entrepreneur became engaged in trading activities in Sierra Leone and Liberia, making use of Jewish and Lebanese trading networks, amongst others, to later extend his trade to Congo, Europe and Israel before returning to the Upper Guinea Coast. Bellagamba underlines the common ground between British colonies, Sierra Leone and the Gambia, and networks of older, precolonially rooted Mande-speaking communities that facilitated the social and occupational integration of transnational traders. Bellagamba's biographical account reveals how ethnic, genealogical and professional continuities across national boundaries helped to establish patrimonial relationships that functioned to smooth individual trading activities.

The illicit international trade with ('blood') diamonds and tropical woods in Liberia and Sierra Leone in exchange for arms and ammunition, and the use of arms smuggled, inter alia, through Guinea-Bissau by Casamançais rebel fighters are abhorrent examples of the region's global connectedness. However, as Bella-

gamba's and Peter Mark and José da Silva Horta's contributions suggest, present-day trade and migration models revert to some extent to a premodern state of transnational network patterns of the past. They demonstrate how the Casamance was integrated into a global web of trade in blade weapons that linked it not only with Europe but also with North Africa, Latin America and the Indian Ocean. In the early nineteenth century, a trade in firearms emerged in the Casamance, involving both French and British trading posts along the Casamance and Gambia Rivers. Mark and da Silva Horta's chapter depicts the changing trade pattern in the Casamance, indicating that trading activities were far more globalized and Africans were far more active agents within them than commonly thought. Representing early examples of 'technoscapes' (Appadurai 1996), these trading activities thereby substantiate the claim that one may speak of globalization in the region well before the late twentieth century.

More recently, drug trafficking has turned parts of the Upper Guinea Coast – such as Guinea-Bissau, Cape Verde and Guinea – into hubs for cocaine shipped from Latin America to Europe (Ellis 2009; Krech 2011). Other forms of globalized transnational economic activities in the region have received less attention. Indian wholesale buyers, for instance, annually return to Guinea-Bissau and Senegal to purchase cashew harvests that are subsequently processed in South Asia before being marketed in the Global North (Kohl, observation based on recent field research). Over the past decades, Cape Verde, Gambia and Senegal have evolved as nascent tourist destinations, entailing the commodification of culture through staged performances (de Jong 2007) and the attraction of young, urban, unemployed men and women who offer various services to tourists, including sex services. The more recent global entanglements of the Upper Guinea Coast include Mauritanian, Nigerian and Chinese migrants who settle in the region to serve various lines of business. By contrast, the settling of Lebanese shopkeepers and traders can be traced back more than a century. In many cases, long-established intraregional trade routes coexist with new trade channels, linking mainland Upper Guinea with Cape Verde and Brazil, for instance.

In political terms, the Upper Guinea Coast is well entrenched in regional organizations, such as the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The region also continues to be integrated in transcontinental, intergovernmental organizations that function as successor institutions to former colonial empires, such as the Community of Portuguese Language Countries (CPLP), the Commonwealth of Nations and the International Organisation of La Francophonie (OIF).

To conclude, this anthology comes full circle, discussing the global connectedness of the Upper Guinea Coast from different points of view to outline how the region has been part of global flows and exchanges stretching far beyond the context of a 'Black Atlantic'.

Notes

1. Born in the four Franco-Senegalese towns of Gorée Island, Dakar, Rufisque and Saint-Louis, the African and *métis* inhabitants of these 'four communes' enjoyed – at least de jure – full French citizenship rights.
2. 'Washington Consensus' denotes a set of policies promoted by the Bretton Wood institutions and the United States. These policies encompass macroeconomic stabilization of national economies and their opening to foreign trade and investments, as well as privatization of state assets and the unleashing of market forces.
3. The commission was established following the 1999 Lomé Peace Accord. Installed by Sierra Leone and the international community, it aimed at an impartial coming to terms with abuses and violence committed during the Sierra Leonean Civil War (1991–2002) and intended to reconcile the warring sides and prevent further violence.

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Part I

Creole Connections

Chapter 1

Towards a Definition of Transnational as a Family Construct

A Historical and Micro Perspective

Bruce L. Mouser

Definitions

Current literature amply demonstrates that 'transnational' is an imprecise and overused term. For the purpose of this study of trader families on the West African coast and their charter generations, transnational is used in two ways. Transnational families contain a primary component on the African mainland. They have family branches living and working in different countries, and those branches interact with each other and are aware of each other's existence. They identify themselves as transnational or are identified by others as transnational. Their more successful branches travel to distant places, study abroad, speak several languages, and are open to the pan-Atlantic market of products and ideas. Multisitedness across national borders and group cohesion are critical components in this definition of the term.

The second definition is more complicated because it involves a self- or other-imposed identity that may transcend or reject ethnic or national membership. In the African context, this may include any prominent cultural or physiological characteristic that separates a group from the majority population, stigmatizes its members for being different, or denies them ethnic membership or even a path to membership. Intermarriage among members within such a group increases the group's self-identity of separateness as well as the impression among others that the group is exclusive, closed, separate and hostile.

A manifestation of these two definitions is the emergence of a creolized group with character and genetic traits that it borrows or modifies from many sources. Grey Gundaker (2000: 125) suggests that Europeans who arrived on the African coast as traders and who expected to remain and raise families there 'made the most of similarities' between their own systems and those of their

hosts. They either accommodated to the cultural norms of the majority population or produced a self-identified hybrid or creolized and multiethnic culture that was denied ethnic membership. To explain how some Europeans and their *métis* families were able to fuse with or accommodate to the dominant population and over time obtain membership and privilege as power-sharing newcomers, Donald Levine (1979) developed a typology that identified stages through which strangers moved to acquire either newcomer status or marginality as a stigmatized and self-identified hybrid and separate group.

Historical Background

Between 1750 and 1850 (the approximate date for the 'effective' end of slave trading from the Rio Pongo), more than seventy American and European slave traders had settled at the Rio Pongo and remained there long enough to produce offspring that carried their surnames. They became a part of a fluid 'African-European frontier' or zone of interconnectedness emerging upon the coast (Coifman 1994; Hannerz 1997). Some of these traders died in their first years, succumbing to diseases, fevers and parasites of the coast, but many others survived and stayed to establish large families and create and join networks of trader families. A select number of these families or their most commercially successful branches became multi-sited, with units operating on the Nunez and Pongo Rivers and residences maintained in Liverpool, England; Charleston, South Carolina; Havana or Matanzas in Cuba; and in one case Boston, Massachusetts. In 1820, Commander Sir G. H. Collier of the Royal Navy described those in the Pongo as:

> the surviving few of some hundreds of original ['Company of Royal] Adventurers[1] [Trading to Africa'], of hardy constitutions, rude habits, and little education, [who] were well calculated for the task they had undertaken; they assimilated themselves to the manners and customs of the Country, and soon became powerful as Chiefs. By marriages with the native Women they had large families, a guarantee for their respect to the customs of the Country, and a pledge for their personal continuance in it; thus consolidating their interest, and uniting their fate with that of the Country…Their children are of course mulattoes.[2]

Jehudi Ashmun (Gurley 1933: 347) wrote in 1827 simply that these traders had 'allied themselves, by something, which in Africa, passes as marriage, with the most powerful native families, and are the proprietors of slaves'. More than a century later, Monsignor Raymond-René Lerouge (Congrégation du Société Esprit)[3] described such an arrangement in less flattering terms, neglecting to indicate that his interpretation contained all that was necessary to establish marital legitimacy in the Pongo context:

One day, we learn that the neighbouring chief sold him one of his daughters (girls) for several spans of Guinea cloth, a few bottles of rum, [and] a few pounds of gunpowder. This woman, with great fanfare, is introduced into the stranger's bedchamber. After a few months, a child is born of this stranger's house. This is the 'mixed race', the true *métis* of the first generation: father white, mother native. A [new] species is founded.

To be sure, the founders of transnational families in the Pongo lacked sophistication and decorum, for they were engaged in the lowest of commerces – slave trading. Moreover, according to Meneses (1987: 231–33), they were operating in an environment of 'a good deal of real hostility'. They represented a threat of potential enslavement and were 'at best disliked and at worst hated' by the majority population. As a minority, they were 'freed from the usual obligation of generosity and kindness'. Some came to establish factories and become businessmen on the coast; some arrived seeking only employment in factories established by others. Nearly all arrived at the Pongo without relatives or a spouse, and they sought – as did their hosts – to remedy that deficiency as quickly as possible. Whatever their motives for remaining in the Pongo, they had to follow local custom if they intended to obtain a wife or partner. One method was to purchase a slave outright and use her as a mistress (Flezar 2009: 67; Brooks 2010: 95). But although that was permitted, it removed the river's 'land kings' (who regulated the use of land) and 'political kings' (involved in social and political interactions) from the 'wifegiving' process. It also created a problem for stigmatized offspring,
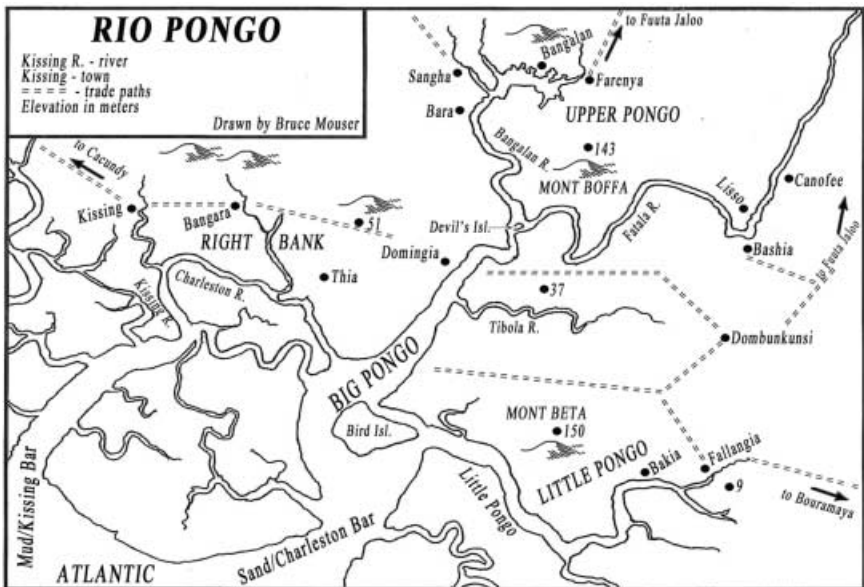
Map 1.1. Rio Pongo

who in addition to being descendants 'of the Saxon race' were also descendants of slave mothers and therefore did not have locally recognized succession and inheritance rights (Conneau 1976: 107; Thayer 1978). Partnering with a slave woman also produced difficulties in the global or pan-Atlantic context, where a person classified as a slave was ineligible to inherit property (Kennedy-Haflett 1996; Flezar 2009: 67–68).

The preferred pattern involved a marriage linked to a comprehensive understanding between parties in landlord/stranger or uncle/nephew relationships (Sarró 2009: 51–55; Diallo 1970; Mouser 1975). Marriage was advantageous to both parties: it permitted the host to tap into his stranger's market while opening his own to the guest (Ballard 2001: 6–8). As host of a European or American, a landholder, especially if he also had political authority, expected any guest to accept a contractual arrangement that stipulated, among many things economic, how a stranger might interact with the host's other subjects. These included women, who were bargaining chips to be used within patron/client relationships, whether those involved Europeans from the Atlantic or Africans from the interior.

A stranger sealed his trading contract with money or a marriage, and likely both (Conneau 1976: 107–11; Mouser 1975). Upon entering the river's commerce, protocol required the stranger to approach the local headman and ask permission to visit his town and territory (Harrell-Bond and Rijnsdorp 1976: 26; Almada 1984 [1594]). Small gifts were exchanged. After an appropriate interval, the topic of trading would be raised; now the discussion assumed a more formal character because land use was involved. Land and political headmen and even elders in secret societies would need to be consulted and compensated for the stranger's privilege to operate within a regional context (Conneau 1976: 109). Eventually an agreement was reached between hosts and guest, with obligations clearly stipulated for all parties. The money part of the arrangement included the semblance of a purchase or lease of land upon which the stranger built his trading factory. Only the buildings and improvements belonged to the trader. The contract set rents for land use and fees for wharf usage, water rights, burial duties and import and export taxes. Other provisions defined a range of allowed activities and mobility, as well as requirements (gunpowder and warriors) the guest/stranger provided his host/landlord in case the latter was attacked by an enemy or a rival family (CMS CAI/E3/99; CMS CAI/E4/127; Mouser 1996: 88–89; Mouser and Mouser 2003: 56).

These arrangements affirmed that land could not be alienated through sale, that strangers and their descendants could never become newcomers, and that the only ruling authority belonged to landlords/hosts or those holding land rights, as permitted by secret societies (Sarró 2009: 54–59). As long as the arriving stranger recognized those principles and accepted a subalternated position within the indigenous society, he could expect that his person, property and family would be

protected, that he would be governed by his own rules within his household, and that his host or hosts would not interfere in his business, unless his contract permitted it.

A disadvantage of this arrangement for the stranger was the lack of choice. The landlord, as 'wifegiver', presented his guest with a daughter or 'girl' that the stranger was obliged to accept, for to refuse would challenge the wifegiver's status and authority and identify the stranger as an intruder or outsider who had little interest in sharing his fortune with his host or hosts (Conneau 1976: 68, 107; Chauveau and Richards 2008: 519). By gifting a classificatory sister or daughter, the wifegiver also positioned a spy in the house of his stranger and produced a set of obligations something like those of an uncle/nephew relationship. The only decision falling to the 'wifetaker' was the scale of ceremony attached to the marriage. The higher the station of the wife, the more expensive would be the marriage ritual (Conneau 1976: 108; Graf 1998: 16, 35).

Theophilus Conneau, a French trader who worked at a factory in the upper Pongo in the 1830s, claimed that his Euro-African employer maintained a seraglio of more than thirty wives and mistresses, some of whom made themselves available to strangers visiting the river (Conneau 1976: 64). Nearly two and a half centuries earlier, André Álvares de Almada (1594) reported that a visiting stranger in the Pongo was asked to pick one female from his host's harem and leave the rest of his host's wives alone for the duration of his visit. In effect this was an attempt to minimize negative consequences and *métis* children that might result from contact with a person with less desirable racial traits (Goffman 1963; Kivel 2002: 122–23; Johnson 2005: 33). And children did result: others reported that there always were 'masterless' and free *métis* eager to attach themselves to a patron (Thayer 1981b: 15, 20; Mouser and Mouser 2003: 27, 82, 86). Still another variant involved companionship as a benefit a trader provided to those Europeans who took jobs in his factory. Conneau reported that he received wages of one slave per month, meals from the kitchens of his employer's wives and 'a private establishment with the accessories not necessary to mention' (Conneau 1976: 66).

Whatever the form of marriage or union, children inevitably appeared. These were the *métis* of the charter generation. When a trader succeeded financially, other of his hosts noticed the advantages of proximity and gifted daughters of their own to seal arrangements with this successful stranger. Family size could quickly become large, depending on how many wives the guest received and particular rules governing child-rearing and breastfeeding. Benjamin Curtis Sr. at Kissing, for instance, was reported to have produced more than fifty children during the twenty-three years he lived in the Pongo (Foreign Office 1830: 8:848). This first generation of mixed European and African children – the Euro-Africans – was perhaps least problematic, except those fathered by strangers who died during the first rainy season. Their mothers were African, and some may have been 'royals' or the free daughters of headmen and landholders. If wives were Susu, who were

patrilineal and patrilocal, they would look to their husband's lineage to find their 'refuge' when catastrophe struck, but since in these cases there typically was no lineage belonging to such a husband, a wife could appeal only to her father, to a fictive lineage composed of non-Africans similar to her husband, or to the factory operator (Conneau 1976: 67–68; Harrell-Bond and Rijnsorp 1976: 7–9; Thayer 1981a: 41–42; Thayer 1983: 119; McLachlan 1999: 15).

As in most cultures, first-generation children grew up in houses kept by their mothers (Harrell-Bond and Rijnsorp 1976: 21–22). Their close kinship cousins were those belonging to their mother's side, for in this instance their fathers' relatives were absent. The identity of siblings, cousins, uncles, aunts and relations became complicated by definitions that were imprecise and set by proximity and local practice. They spoke the language(s) of their mother(s) on the playground and that of their father in the marketplace, especially when dealing with Europeans. Some from the more commercially successful branches of trader families attended European schools (at Freetown, London, Liverpool, Havana, Matanzas, Charleston or – when the Pongo began to slip into a French sphere of influence after 1850 – Gorée or Saint Louis in Senegal), and they obtained self-identified membership in those worlds or were stigmatized by others as belonging to those less desirable worlds. Their principal playmates were the sons and daughters of other traders, for it was with them that they shared the most time, proximity and characteristics. Those of the first generations were light-skinned and carried European features. They had stakes in three civilizations: that of their fathers, that of their mothers and the civilization of the *métis*. In 1821, for instance, Brian O'Beirne of Freetown described William Lawrence of Domingia, who was at least a third-generation Euro-African descendent, as 'a person dressed in Nankeen Jacket and Trowsers and who, although nearly as dark as many around him, had the features of a good looking European' (O'Beirne 1979: 224–25).

Many strangers died during the first rainy season. If children and a wife were left behind, the mother might take their offspring to her father's compound, or she might seek an alliance or marital relationship with another trader. That happened with Phenda, who married John Fraser at the Îles de Los in 1799 (Schafer 1999). Another possibility was to continue her former husband's enterprise, with the considerable help of friends or kin (Thayer 1983). Any widow might avail herself of this option, but there had to be a male protector (husband's brother or son) to whom she was ultimately responsible, at least nominally. She might acquire 'Big Man' status and command respect and authority, but only so long as she was able to maintain discipline within her husband's extended family, of which she might be the senior or most respected member (Thayer 1979: 63–64). That happened with the widow of John Ormond Sr., who remained a powerful voice within Ormond family interests in the upper Pongo for nearly two decades after her husband's death until her son John Ormond Jr. returned from London to reclaim his father's position in river commerce (Conneau 1976).

Some of these children found themselves further isolated by colour, physical features and European first names. Their hue stigmatized them as European by locals and as African by traders. The Rev. Peter Hartwig, who lived in Freetown and Sumbuya from 1804 to 1815, described the dilemma encountered by a widowed mother of *métis* children, suggesting that she 'is often so circumstanced [and her children so stigmatized] that she is forced to leave them [offspring] at the factory' (Mouser and Mouser 2003: 86). Inevitably, some of these children found attachment and employment with European traders or with others of mixed race, such as the Luso-Africans. Almada (1594) wrote simply that 'if one [child] happens to be begotten by a white, he [the host] gives it to the father who takes it away'.

The above description of marriage practice and kinship, however, relates only to newly arriving strangers. Not all strangers arrived at the same time or even during the same decades. Documentation of arriving traders is best for the last decade of the eighteenth century and the first two decades of the nineteenth. In that thirty-year span it is first possible to observe the characteristics of a separate transnational community of traders and families moving through stages of acceptance or denial. Of the two families sampled in this study, one founder arrived in the Rio Pongo in the mid-1760s and the other in the first decade of the 1800s. In that forty-year span, the evidence suggests that founders, unless they came as employees of factors, conformed to the pattern of mandatory marriage linked to landlord/stranger agreements. Only in the second and following generations did the issue of creole identity appear, a consequence of increasing numbers of Euro-African descendants who claimed membership in trader families, who were identified as 'mulattoes' by missionaries operating schools in the river and as persons lacking ethnically assigned rights by locals, and had reached different levels of assimilation or acculturation with the host society.

The problem of self-identity was less acute among elite branches of trader families that owned and operated factories, prodigiously intermarried and obtained education in religious and foreign schools. This group also travelled abroad, maintained pan-Atlantic residences and held economic influence and resources unimagined by local political and land kings. Being transnational granted this elite group a degree of independence from local customs and rituals, but it was obtained at a price. This included a 'formal' subordinate relationship with hosts and an understanding that descendants neither might nor could ever aspire to authority, even though they often exercised as much relative power as did hosts, or more.

The level of education attained and travels undertaken by *métis* family members were important variables influencing the growth of their transnational or hybrid identity in a world characterized by 'zones where cultures meet' (Hannerz 1997: 3). In the 1780s, British companies operating from Bance Island in Sierra Leone and at the Îles de Los had sent upwards of seventy sons and daughters of headmen and traders to Liverpool, expecting them 'to learn Sense and get a good Head'[4] and to return to the African coast as agents of Atlantic and European

commerce (Graf 1998: 15; Brooks 2003: 298). Among those attending school in Liverpool from the Pongo were John Holman Jr., Emmanuel Gomez and William Jellorum Fernandez. Elizabeth Cleveland of Banana Islands at Sierra Leone, whose brother John also had studied in Liverpool, migrated to Charleston. There, with money from her brother, she purchased a plantation and opened a school for African youths (Koger 2006: 54; Montgomery 2007). John Ormond Jr. lived in London for more than a decade before being impressed for five years into the British navy, during which time he travelled in the Mediterranean and among the Caribbean islands. In 1799, Governor Zachary Macaulay took twenty-one children – five of them from the Pongo – to London, where they attended a school at Clapham Common (Mouser 2004: 96–99). When the British established a colony at Sierra Leone, traders from the Pongo and Nunez sent children to board there for their education.

Opportunities for travel and education abroad for *métis* from the Pongo continued in the nineteenth century. Jellorum Harrison of Fallangia spent several years in Edinburgh, Scotland, where he helped Henry Brunton produce the first Susu grammar and dictionary (Brunton 1802) before travelling through Central Asia for more than a decade, after which he travelled in the Americas (Hair 1962). In 1812, James Fraser was attending school in Charleston, South Carolina, while his sister Margaret was living with the Powell family in Liverpool. Traders sent children to schools to study Spanish in Matanzas and Havana in Cuba, as Spanish-speaking slave markets then dominated the trade in the Americas. In 1817, a French captain visited the Pongo, recruiting students to a newly opened school for African youths in the West Indies; one headman sent two of his sons (Mouser 2000). These lengthy encounters with other cultures inclined family members who experienced them to adopt a flexible notion of citizenship (Ong 1999) which, while widening their world view, may also have narrowed their recognition of their own membership in any group.

Between 1808 and 1817, the presence in the Pongo itself of schools founded by missionaries and teachers of the Church Missionary Society (CMS) had a major, immediate impact upon trader families' transition to a separate and hybrid status. These schools created a 'social [and physical] space' (Drotbohm 2009: 133; Góis 2005: 265–66) in which another type of membership might develop and accelerated changes already occurring among elite groups of traders' children. In Butscher's list of fifty-two children attending the CMS's Bashia School in 1811, for instance, thirty-six were described as mulattoes and forty-four carried European surnames.[5] Thirty were males. Ages ranged from 5 to 18, although eighteen students in 1811 were among the group aged 12 to 16 (CMS CAI/E2/103). When schools began in 1808, missionaries required students to use only the Susu language, but in 1809 they changed to English instruction, largely at the insistence of traders, who were paying tuition and expected schools to provide a foundation useful in Atlantic commerce.

In these schools students boarded together for extended periods, forming lasting friendships. The schools reinforced the European view that whites were superior to blacks and that *métis* children were a mongrel race, thus adding to their stigma. They were separated from siblings and relatives who remained in family compounds. If they remained in school long enough, their world view became at least partly that held by missionaries, their role models. That world view could expand to encompass pan-Atlantic commerce and business techniques, travel to foreign places (especially following the introduction of regular packet services), study of foreign languages and use of foreign manufactures (Coifman 1994; Mouser 2009). Many if not most converted to Christianity, which further separated them from their indigenous relatives and from family members born to less successful branches. Many of them married classmates, resulting in an intermarried generation with the CMS and the Anglican Church as their social and cultural base. Some married in the 'country fashion' and without church sanction, but others fulfilled both requirements (CMS CAI/E4/19).

The CMS schools also provided a foundation for an attitude of study, integration and separation that carried over to schools abroad, whether located in Freetown, London, Liverpool, Matanzas, Havana or Charleston. Among these venues, the Freetown connection was the closest and most available, and the creole identity emerging there, while separate and different in origin from that occurring in the Pongo, further reinforced the transnational status of mixed-race children relative to children in the Pongo's majority population. It also tied them more closely to mixed-race children in the diaspora.

Peter Mark (1999), in his essay on the evolution of Luso-African identity, noted that cultural markers that produced a separate identity within charter generations eroded over time as succeeding generations intermarried with indigenous groups, indigenous peoples changed to meet challenges arriving from the Atlantic, and strangers lost physical traits that had separated them from the majority population. That certainly occurred, but unfortunately the surviving record of the charter generations in the Pongo tells us only about their most successful or noteworthy members, offering almost nothing about those that lacked notoriety. Nor does the record provide details about the impact of travel, education and broadening world view or 'ethnic shifts' (Keese 2010: 191) upon sons and daughters of African headmen who also attended schools and participated in the Atlantic Exchange. That impact was likely considerable, especially if they continued to intermarry with families descended from American and European traders. Data shows that indigenous leaders were able to shift ethnic identity depending upon circumstance by situationally using a language or dialect, a personal name, or a cultural pattern ('badge' or 'label') as a cultural marker to designate group membership (Moerman 1965; Mouser 2002).

Fortunately, priests and teachers associated with the mission of the Spiritan (Holy Ghost) Fathers (Archives Générales du Congrégation du Saint-Esprit) in

the 1930s and 1940s kept records that contain elaborate genealogies of more than twenty influential families in the Pongo, nine of which were founded by slave traders who had arrived on the coast by the beginning of the nineteenth century.[6] The mission's records also provide details about educational opportunities made available to both headmen and traders during the French colonial period, which produced another 'social space' that further reduced differences between leadership groups within the Pongo.

Unfortunately, no sophisticated attempt has been made to correlate genealogical data collected by the Spiritan Fathers and data found in letters and reports sent to London by CMS missionaries. Records are, however, sufficient to confirm that elite branches of trader families and those of river headmen intermarried, and that they continued to play prominent roles in Pongo commerce and society into the twenty-first century. For example, Raymond-Marie Tchidimbo (Tchidimbo 1987: 22), Roman Catholic Archbishop of Conakry from 1961 to 1979 and a Spiritan Father who died on 15 August 2011, was able to trace his American ancestry through his mother, whom he identified as a *métis*, to Benjamin Curtis, who arrived in the Pongo from Boston in 1794. Through the Curtis family, Tchidimbo also traced his descent to the Pongo's royal Kati family, with which Curtis had intermarried. Using information from Tchidimbo's autobiography, data from CMS records and reports found in the Archives Générales du Sénégal, Coifman (1994) produced an important but incomplete genealogy of Archbishop Tchidimbo that details the fusion of Curtis and Kati political interests in the Pongo and the critical role played by the Curtis family into the late twentieth century. In her concluding sentence, Coifman (1994: 289) noted that 'when Raymond-Marie Tchidimbo returned home [from abroad] in 1952, he was met at Conakry by a tribe of kin and relations, Christian and Muslim, of Curtis, Katty, Turpin, Fernandez, Litburn [Lightbourn], Wilkinson and Tchidimbo', with at least five of those dating their origins to the eighteenth century.

At the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth, the number of transnational families who counted their residences in the Rio Pongo as primary, and whose charter generations either maintained residences in America or sent their children to America or abroad for education, was significant. Two examples – the Holman and Fraser families – with primary branches in the Rio Pongo are used here to illustrate the transnational nature of these new families. Both were multi-sited, with links in Africa, America and England. Both engaged in the slave trade and operated plantations on both sides of the Atlantic.

Holman Family

John Holman Sr. was from London, where his brothers were innkeepers and a pewterer but also investors in his African commerce.[7] By 1768, Holman was already established in the Pongo and Dembia river trades, with commercial ties to

London-based traders at Bance Island in Sierra Leone and to Liverpool interests at the nearby Îles de Los (Hancock 1995: 177–220). Holman also maintained close commercial ties with the most important slave merchants in Charleston, South Carolina (Koger 1995: 110–11).

Holman had several wives in the Pongo, none of whom were identified as free persons. His principal wife, Elizabeth, was listed in official documents as a 'slave' who bore him at least five children (John II, Samuel, Esther, Elizabeth and Margaret). By another wife he had sons Richard and William. Yet another wife bore him a son known in the Nunez trade as John Coleman. No other children or wives were reported in documents. John Sr. sent John II to study in Liverpool, but by 1785 John II, Samuel and their half-brother William were already operating trading enterprises of their own in the Rio Pongo.

Holman remained active in the Rio Pongo until 1790, when he moved his wife Elizabeth, their children and their slaves to South Carolina. In 1783 an insurrection of slaves and subalterns had broken out in the state of Moria, less than a hundred kilometres south-east of the Pongo, encouraging slave rebellions throughout the region (Mouser 2007: 27–41). Holman, then the second wealthiest trader in Pongo commerce, began to look abroad, where he might better protect his investments and his family, and in 1787 he travelled to Charleston, where he arranged to purchase Blessing Plantation (Koger 1995: 111). Three years later he left the Pongo with his family and slaves, and after a brief detour to Savannah, Georgia, he established his family at Blessing Plantation in 1791.[8]

Much is known about the Holman family, partly because inheritance problems after Holman's death soon after his arrival in South Carolina produced records that contained particulars about the family's investments in both Africa and America. British documents also detailed the family's activities in the Rio Pongo. William Holman and his family had remained in the Pongo, taking possession of John Sr.'s interests at Bashia in the upper Pongo and continuing to ship slaves to the Charleston market in the following years (Corry 1807: 92; Knutsford 1900: 126; Afzelius 1967: 105–9). In his last will and testament, John Sr. freed his wife Elizabeth and assigned management of his property in South Carolina to his sons John II and Samuel.

Within three generations, John Sr.'s descendants had become models of transnational families – and of the tensions that occurred within these families. John II, who had studied in Liverpool, moved his family and slaves to South Carolina in 1790. Following the death of his father in 1791, he purchased a plantation near Blessing Plantation where he used his and his father's slaves, who would have comprised a large slave workforce numbering nearly a hundred. He also travelled often to the Pongo, as he still had economic interests in Africa and there were still enormous profits to be obtained in the slave trade. Eventually, having grown dissatisfied with his life in South Carolina and the type of hybrid, segregated African American society that had developed there, he returned to the

Rio Pongo, though he meanwhile continued to operate a plantation in South Carolina under the management of his brother Samuel. Koger (1995: 116–17) described John II as 'probably the first and only African-born entrepreneur who resided in Africa as an absentee planter in the New World'. He married a 'mulatto' woman from 'America' who bore him at least four children (Margaret, Betsy, Elizabeth and John III). All his children attended CMS schools established in the Rio Pongo between 1808 and 1817. His brother Samuel remained in South Carolina and married a 'free person of colour' from Charleston. Both Elizabeth and Margaret married Collins brothers, described as 'persons of colour' and owners of rice growing plantations. Esther also remained in South Carolina and married James Anderson, whose uncle, Richard Oswald, had operated factories in the Rio Pongo in the mid-eighteenth century (Koger 2006: 119–24).[9] Essentially the American branch assumed characteristics that were American and married within the Euro-African group, although the latter was located in South Carolina rather than in the Pongo.

The African branch of the family, or at least the one descended from John II, identified itself as more African than the branch located in South Carolina, likely a response to the types of creolization that had occurred in both places. John II was particularly disappointed that Samuel and his sisters had devoted little attention to his property in South Carolina, which he lost through their mismanagement. In 1816 his daughter Margaret married Jellorum Harrison, who had lived in Scotland and Central Asia and visited America (Hair 1962: 45–47). Harrison later served as a catechist at Bashia School, where Margaret was a student. Harrison's uncle was William Fernandez, headman at Bouramaya, who had studied in Liverpool in his youth (CMS CAI/E5/18 and CAI/E4/100). Harrison also was a cousin to John Ormond Jr. (a trader at Bangalan who travelled often to Havana), to Elizabeth Lightbourn (a trader at Farenya whose husband's brother was a lawyer in Charleston) and to Richard Wilkinson of Fallangia on the Little Pongo. Wilkinson, who had studied as a catechist in London in 1815 and 1816, spoke Baga, Susu, Fula, English and a bit of Portuguese. In 1821, Wilkinson sailed to Baltimore, Maryland, to purchase trade goods for the Pongo market and, while there, became an official interpreter for the U.S. government in a case involving slaves who had accidentally illegally entered the United States as crewmen on board a trading vessel (Mouser 2000). Margaret's sister Betsy married William Lawrence, who was fluent in English, Portuguese, Baga, Susu and Fula, and who was well enough respected in Freetown to purchase property there in the late 1820s. Both sisters' marriages were performed as church ceremonies, but Betsy and William Lawrence were also wedded in the 'country fashion', indicating a fusion of European and African customs. Like his father, John III studied in Liverpool.

Interestingly, the Holman name largely disappeared in South Carolina, where it was subsumed into the Collins and Anderson families. Still, Koger (1995: 127) was able to write in 1995 that 'the colored rice planters of Charleston and

Georgetown counties can be traced to the Holman family'. The Holman name is also rare in later Pongo history, whereas the names Lawrence, Wilkinson and Harrison featured prominently into the twentieth century.

Fraser Family

John Fraser, born in Scotland in 1769, entered Pongo commerce as a slave trader before 1799, lived in the river region until 1807 and remained active there until his death in 1813. He married Phenda, the widow of a prominent British trader who had operated a successful Liverpool-linked factory at the Îles de Los. Fraser established his principal centres of commerce in the Pongo at Bangara, Bashia and Bangalan (*Valley Sunday Star-Monitor-Herald* [Brownsville, Texas], 9, 16 and 23 January 1938). Between 1799 and 1807, he and Phenda, described in marriage documents as a free person and no doubt the heir to her previous husband's investments in the river trade, had five children. When South Carolina reopened the slave trade in 1803, Fraser expanded his commercial enterprise by establishing an office in Charleston, moving there along with a large number of people from the Pongo. He left Phenda and his three youngest children at Bashia, where the children would attend school and Phenda would manage his and her considerable economic interests (CMS CAI/E4/19; Schafer 1999: 1–2).

By 1812, Phenda had moved the centre of her operations in the Pongo to the Bangalan branch of the river. Son James was sent to Charleston and enrolled in school there (Koger 2006). Daughter Margaret was taken to Liverpool at age four to live with Thomas Powell, who maintained additional residences in Charleston and the Îles de Los (Schafer 1999: 4). When the slave trade became illegal for British and American citizens in 1808, Fraser moved his Charleston-based operations to East Florida, which was then still a Spanish colony. He died there in 1813 in a shipwreck. His holdings in the Pongo, until the time of his death, were administered by his wife Phenda and by Zebulon Miller, George Cooke, Samuel Gale (all Americans) and Samuel Samo (a Dutch subject).

Fraser's holdings and his last will and testament reveal much about the operation of this family. The value of his Florida plantations alone stood at USD 56,744 in 1813 (USD 780,000 at 2010 purchasing power). In a lawsuit against the British government for damages to his property caused by a British squadron raid directed against American traders in the Bangalan branch of the Pongo in 1812, Fraser claimed that the British, assuming he was an American citizen, had destroyed property worth USD 40,000. His daughters Mary Ann, Eleanor and Elizabeth, who in 1813 were students at the CMS school at Bashia, were subsequently sent to England and France for training (*Valley Sunday Star-Monitor-Herald,* 9, 16 and 23 January 1938; Schafer 1999: 4–6).

According to Fraser's will, his children would inherit only upon reaching the age of twenty-one. That Fraser freed Phenda (who was already free) in his will

also complicated the distribution of his property, for persons identified as slave in Spanish Florida could not be freed in a will or inherit property. Executors paid the educational expenses of Fraser's children in Europe, but legal challenges and court and legal costs attached to administration of his estate multiplied (Schafer 1999: 6). Elizabeth and Mary Ann, who by 1826 had returned to the Pongo and married William Skelton Jr. and Thomas Gaffery Curtis of Kissing, appointed their husbands to negotiate distribution of their inheritances. Their husbands turned for assistance to Styles Lightbourn in the upper Pongo, whose brother was a Charleston attorney. The final settlement was not reached for yet another quarter century, when Elizabeth (now the only living heir) received USD 33,000 (USD 955,000 in 2009 dollars) (Schafer 1999: 3). In 1851, Elizabeth and her husband were then principal traders at Victoria, located in the lower Nunez River (Coifman 2000: 501–2).

Conclusions

A study of these two families suggests that several constructs had developed within the first, founding generations. In each case, the founder came to the coast as a stranger without a lineage to provide protection to himself or the wife he acquired when he settled there. The common cultural marker was the marriage of a lineage-less stranger to a local woman who was either a free person or a person of slave background. The kinship model – that of the dominant Susu group – was patrilineal and patrilocal. In this arrangement, widowed or abandoned wives could appeal only to their father's family for support, though widows also had the option of marrying another stranger (Butscher 2000 [1815]: 10). A widow might otherwise obtain 'Big Man' status either through her children or through property or the control of property she or her children may have inherited.

But there also was a construct that was new, at least to a degree. Marriage alliances were common, whether involving indigenous unions or only strangers. Characteristics among the charter generations of strangers ('mulatto' features, Western dress, religious observance, language use, first names and surnames, education, occupation, travel, location, mobility), however, were commonly held attributes that stigmatized and marginalized them, and also encouraged family alliances among elite branches and development of a self-identified hybrid culture, similar to the 'creolization' described by Knörr (2010: 733). The most successful and best travelled branches of these families intermarried prodigiously and produced an expatriate/hybrid community that, to a degree, was outside the bounds of uncle/nephew obligations.

This community enjoyed liberties and opportunities that others more closely tied to traditional patterns did not have. Its members needed to follow some rules to remain influential and protected within the Rio Pongo context, as the dominant indigenous group recognized and stigmatized them as persons having less

desirable characteristics and separate origins with their own customs and rules. The stigma attached to these families, however, was different from that attached to the creole community of Sierra Leone. All Pongo-based families mentioned in this study trace their origins to the slave trade and to landlord/stranger relationships that involved wifegiving and wifetaking.

These examples suggest that accommodation and acculturation did occur, but only to a degree in the early generations. That changed significantly once the 'social space' changed during the French period that began in the 1850s. The basic notion of patrilineal descent was like that practised in the West, except that the wife lost claims upon her father's lineage. What mattered most was 'free' status, which defined who could inherit and claim authority within an extended family.

Sir George Collier suggested in 1820 that large family size guaranteed respect for the customs of the country. That may indeed have occurred, but our knowledge of the size of a family is limited to records kept by its elite members who found it worthwhile to do so, or to outside resources that identify certain persons meriting inclusion in reports. The emergence of large families – especially those connected through marriage alliances – and of the mobility and transnational connections evidenced in the charter generations of the Holman and Fraser families, reduced their compliance with customs that challenged their own economic and social interests. Meanwhile, with the passage of time and intermarriage outside the trader alliances, especially during the French period, their ties to local kinship groups and to obligations linked to traditional uncle/nephew relationships increased rather than decreased, as was so for the Curtis family of Archbishop Tchidimbo. Their mobility and access to wealth, education and colonial authorities who established agencies on the river further strengthened their own influence relative to traditional authority and custom.

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Notes

1. The Company of Royal Adventurers Trading to Africa was the original name of the Royal African Company.
2. 'Second Annual Report upon the Settlements on the Coast of Africa, by Commodore Sir G.R. Collier, 16th September 1820' (Foreign Office 1830: 8:847–48). Surnames of

traders in the Pongo before 1840 include: Andrews, Anthony, Bearing, Botefere, Brodie, Brody, Dunbar, Bull, Carr, Cockelshell, Coffin, Cook, Cooke, Cooper, Conneau, Cummings, Curtis, Dickson, Dunbar, East, Ellis, Faber, Fist, Fraser, Gaffrey, Gale, Gardner, Garrett, Gilton, Gomez, Gray, Grey, Griggs, Harrison, Hickson, Holman, Irving, Irwin, Jeffrys, Johnson, Josiffe, Lancaster, Lawrence, Lightbourn, Lorial, Maguire, Miller, Misgan, Nelson, Nevel, Ormond, Pearce, Pendleton, Perry, Peters, Quail, Rhodes, Richards, Richardson, Samo, Skelton, Sparratt, Spearce, Sterne, Talboard, Tavel, Thomas, Tillinghast, Tool, Tryon, Varing, Welsh, White, Wilkinson, Wilson, Wood.

3. R. Lerouge, 'Quand la Guinée s'appelait "Rivières du Sud" (Miettes d'histoire),' Archive Générales Congrégation du Saint-Esprit, Boite 269, A-I, page 28. This is an unpublished typescript. Lerouge had few kind words for the founders of families, describing them as arrived 'as poor as Job' (32). He also described the first generation of *métis* children as 'the first degeneration' (32).

4. Quoted in Great Britain, Privy Council, 'Report of the Lords of the Committee of Council…relating to Trade and Foreign Plantations, 1789' (enclosed letter, John Matthews, James Penny and Robert Norris to John Tarleton, 16 April 1788).

5. Caulker, Cummings, Curtis, Jeffrys, Lancaster, Lawrence, Quail, Rhode, Wilkinson, Anthony, Botefere, Cockleshell, Fraser, Garrett, Gilton, Hickson and Peters.

6. I am greatly indebted to V.B. Coifman (University of Minnesota), G.E. Brooks (Indiana University) and R. Sarrò Maluquer (Oxford University), who made their photocopies of genealogical material from the Archives Générales, Congregation du Saint-Esprit, Chevilly-Larue, available for this research.

7. I am indebted to R. Chaney of Lyndonville, New York, for crucial information about the Holman family. His wife is a descendant of John Holman through the Collins family of South Carolina. Chaney relished the process of discovery, and we communicated often about his findings. He was an enthusiastic researcher but a reluctant writer. In 2008, I asked his permission to use his findings for a summary of Holman activities in the United States, and Chaney supplied me with several documents that he considered most helpful. We were at that stage of collaboration when I learned of his death in 2009. His papers relating to the Holman family were not kept following his death.

8. Petition of John Holman to the Speaker and Members of the South Carolina House of Representatives, 13 January 1791, Records of the General Assembly, #123, South Carolina Department of Archives and History.

9. There is some disagreement whether this James Anderson was the same as the person identified by Koger.

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Chapter 2

Luso-Creole Culture and Identity Compared

The Cases of Guinea-Bissau and Sri Lanka

Christoph Kohl

Introduction

The Upper Guinea Coast is a special case, where processes of creolization in connection to Portugal's expansion are concerned. Colonial ideology used to depict Guinea-Bissau as the 'first Portuguese possession', 'cradle' (Reis Torgal 2005: 64), and 'dawn' (Governo da Guiné 1952) of the Portuguese empire. The Portuguese called at the Upper Guinea Coast on their way to Asia and Brazil. Portuguese culture, having 'disembarked' there first, has been appropriated, integrated and transformed by local populations there since the late fifteenth century. Hence, the Upper Guinea Coast was the first region where creolization occurred in connection to (Portuguese) colonialism (Vale de Almeida 2007). Processes of cultural and particularly linguistic creolization in Africa and Asia have been the subject of several 'mono-sited' studies. However, very few (e.g. Knörr 2008, 2010) involve a comparative look at such processes and their social impact. Generally speaking, findings concerning linguistic connections are linked to connections beyond language – where people speak, they interact (and vice versa); and where they interact, new culture and new identifications are likely to emerge. Research has, however, led to a number of studies on creole groups and culture, which I term 'Luso-Creole'. This notion alludes to a network of 'continued identities' and cultural representations that started emerging during the Portuguese expansion that began in the fifteenth century and have since acquired specific complexities and dynamics (Pina Cabral 2010).

Historical links between the Luso-Creole language varieties in Guinea-Bissau, the Casamance and Cape Verde, and between Upper Guinea, the Gulf of Guinea islands and the Caribbean (Martinus 1996; Jacobs 2009) are not disputed, but early connections between the Upper Guinea Coast and Asia (cf. Kohl 2011c; cf.

Cardoso 2010) are somewhat more controversial. According to the monogenetic hypothesis – based on historico-linguistic data put forward by Thompson (1961a, 1961b) and Valkhoff (1966, 1972) but contested by authors like Ferraz (1987), amongst others – a Luso-Creole language served as the first global lingua franca, connecting the Indian Ocean basin with Africa. Hancock (1975) claimed that Asian Luso-Creole languages generally seem to be marginally connected to the Upper Guinea Coast. Cardoso (2010) recently suggested that ships' passengers journeying from Africa to Asia may have acted as transmitters of Luso-Pidgin elements, leaving unmentioned the possibility that Africans who (were) settled in parts of Asia may have contributed to the spread of Luso-Creole languages there.

Against this background, this chapter sets out to compare some of the dynamics at play in processes of cultural creolization – namely, creole identity construction, creole boundary maintenance and creole influences on postcolonial nation-building – in Guinea-Bissau and Sri Lanka. In doing so, it aims to disclose similarities and differences of the processes and results of creolization, and explain how these resemblances and differences are related to the social make-up of the respective societies in which they occur.[1]

Lusocreolization in Cross-Cultural Research

The carrying out of a comparative survey has to rely substantially on existing scholarly literature, not just because no researcher alone can study all the different creole groups to be examined, but also because comparisons may well profit from a historical perspective based on historical sources. Meanwhile, cross-cultural analyses may have to rely on fairly diverse, disparate ethnographic data from the respective geographic settings, which complicates comparisons – as is the case with this study. If we choose to look at (Luso-)Creole culture and identity in a comparative, cross-cultural perspective, then we need to conceptualize 'creole' as an analytical term, since attributes like 'creole' and its cognates in other European languages ('créole', 'crioulo', 'criollo', etc.) 'have meant lots of different things at different times' (Stewart 2007: 5).

The creole case is further complicated by the fact that some creole groups are – by reason of their heterogeneous origins within colonial contexts – identified as 'creoles' by third parties yet do not employ the adjective 'creole' (or its counterpart in any other language) as part of their ethnonym or self-description. This applies, for example, to the Kristons de Geba in Guinea-Bissau (Kohl 2009a, 2009b) as well as the Portuguese Burghers and so-called Kaffirs in Sri Lanka – cases to be studied in this chapter. Furthermore, a creole language does not necessarily exist in all locations where creole groups live, as shown by the examples of the Agudás and Tabom in Ghana, Benin, Togo and Nigeria, who, although they do not speak a creole language, are nevertheless regarded as creoles by historians and social anthropologists. The fact that analytical and actor perspectives on

'creoleness' can differ (Knörr 2010) is thus important for comparisons. In Sierra Leone and Guinea-Bissau, moreover, creole languages initially spoken mainly by members of small creole groups spread across ethnic boundaries and turned into major lingua francas. As a result, a small number of 'creoles' serve a large number of creole speakers.

How, then, can different meanings of 'creole' and 'creolization' be conceived in ways that make them appropriate tools for cross-cultural research? 'Creolization' in an anthropological sense may be conceived as an intergenerational process in which old group boundaries are increasingly dissolved and replaced by new ones. This process is accompanied by the recontextualization of both identity and culture (Knörr 2010) and may result in strongly or weakly ethnicized new identities (cf. Kohl 2009b). Creolization is thus linked to indigenization, in that a newly emerging creole group increasingly identifies with its new local, cultural and social environment and refers to the latter and to a specific shared history as markers of group identity (Knörr 2010). At this juncture, new settlers can become 'firstcomers' to certain localities, as opposed to the 'latecomers' who follow thereafter (Kopytoff 1987). In several cases, creole groups have surrounded themselves with a mystique of exclusiveness (Cohen 1981; Roberts, Reheem and Colin-Thomé 1989), portraying themselves as 'bringers of civilization' and thereby distancing themselves from the autochthonous, 'noncivilized' population. Historical processes of creolization often occurred in societies that were shaped by rather fixed boundaries along social, physical and ancestral criteria, constraining socially upward and downward mobility (Knörr 2010). However, creole identity is not a priori linked to phenotypical and class-related characteristics (notably elite status; see Knörr 2010), and its emergence is not restricted to locations that were subject to European colonization. Rather, creolization occurs in settings marked by cultural and identitarian heterogeneity and social hierarchies. Therefore, creolization can also occur in settings untouched by European colonialism, such as (precolonial) East Africa (e.g. Walker 2005; Bryceson 2010), where a distinct Swahili identity emerged in some coastal settings.

Cultural creolization is not to be equated with processes of urbanization or 'detribalization'. Indeed, it has often occurred in rural settings like the plantation societies of the Caribbean. Likewise, urbanization may entail indigenization but does not necessarily involve creolization. Detribalization – a term often used to denote processes in which people become estranged from their 'traditional' culture upon coming into contact with 'modern' ways of life, often in multiethnic and urban settings – however, constitutes one aspect of cultural creolization in that the forging of a new common identity among people of various origins necessitates the de-ethnicization of the different original identities in support of the newly emerging common identity (Knörr 2010). Processes of cultural creolization are distinct from processes of cultural transethnicization (which Knörr [2010] termed 'pidginization'): although in both cases a new common identity

evolves, in the course of transethnicization the heterogeneous original identities stay intact and are not substituted by the newly emerging identity.

What might comparative analyses of Luso-Creole culture and identity look like, and how can 'Luso-Creole' be conceptualized? Here, Luso-Creole refers to a 'travel of ideas' (Czarniawska and Joerges 1996; Kaufmann and Rottenburg 2012), alluding to long-term impacts of Portugal's maritime interactions and interchanges that continue to unfold their potentials to the present day, as evidenced by now-current narratives, cultural representations and identity constructions that ex post refer to past times of Portuguese colonization. In fact, many Luso-Creole communities continue to refer to Portuguese legacies, such as the Catholic faith and Luso-Creole languages, that are often employed as ethnic markers. However, these markers are insufficient to define a 'Luso-Creole' (Pina Cabral 2010), or to delineate a 'Portuguese' space, as proponents of 'lusotropicalism' have suggested. Lusotropicalism was Portugal's colonial ideology before 1974. Taking a Eurocentric and essentialist perspective, this ideology attributed to the Portuguese the exceptional ability to acclimatize to the tropics and socioculturally fraternize with the colonized people, thus attempting to underline the Iberian country's greatness and peculiarity (Castelo 1999). The doctrine therefore implied that a number of groups colonized or influenced by Portugal since the fifteenth century shared a Portuguese cultural 'essence' that suggested a specific cultural reciprocity with Portugal yet never existed in social practice.

Analytically, Luso-Creole markers are not fixed cultural essences. Rather, they are subject to continuous reinterpretations, recontextualizations and even reifications that serve to maintain and redraw cultural and identitarian boundaries vis-à-vis other groups. During Portugal's colonial expansion, the encounter between Eurocentric ideas and diverse, locally specific thought-worlds led to the unplanned translation of ideas, turning them into different substances (Czarniawska and Joerges 1996). In the long run, sociocultural values, norms and features were often selectively appropriated by emerging Luso-Creole groups – both intentionally and unintentionally – that subsequently integrated and adjusted them to their own needs and cultural structures: 'those social innovations that were incompatible with local social structures were rejected, but useful or unthreatening characteristics were embraced, particularly if such moves were likely to be seen as positive attributes' (Walker 2005: 195).

A Luso-Creole 'travel of ideas' can attest to the power of the colonized subjects who, as agents, creatively and selectively appropriated specific 'Portuguese' sociocultural values and representations, combining them with their own ideas or those borrowed from third parties, and thereby underscoring intercultural interactions of various kinds. Thus, the imitation and appropriation of ideas was by no means unilateral (as lusotropicalism suggested); rather, the 'travel of ideas' has always gone back and forth. Europe in general, like Portugal in particular, has proved to be only one disseminator of ideas, albeit quite a powerful one. Once

appropriated, ideas of heterogeneous origins were integrated, intermingled and transformed over generations, sometimes to such an extent that their origins are no longer traceable. Nevertheless, in various geographic settings references to Portugal can be quite strong, serving as markers of difference in mutual boundary construction. In African, American and Asian creole contexts, 'Portuguese' may often be interpreted differently from European understandings of the term. Furthermore, many who refer to 'Portuguese' or Christian-Catholic features may not at all identify themselves as 'Portuguese'. References to 'Portuguese' change over time and are always related to context and place (cf. Fabian 1983). A Luso-Creole space can be conceived as an intersubjective network of contacts that owes its existence to distinct markers – sociocultural concepts, styles, ideas, features, patterns of cognition – that in various localities have passed through manifold complex and creative dynamics (Pina Cabral 2010).

In the following discussion of Luso-Creole culture and identity I will concentrate on two objects of comparison. Using my findings from Guinea-Bissau and data extracted from scholarly literature on Sri Lanka, I will address (1) the construction of creole identities and the strategies employed to maintain boundaries in the interaction with other, non-creole groups; and (2) creole groups' contributions to postcolonial nation-building, both top-down and from below. Given the dissimilarity and incompleteness of data, this can only be done in a preliminary fashion at this point.

Guinea-Bissau versus Sri Lanka

In the second half of the fifteenth century, the Portuguese started establishing trading posts along the West African coast. There, Europeans, Cape Verdeans and Africans came to interact and intermingle, increasingly developing distinct identities and lifestyles that exist up to the present day. Guinea-Bissau remained a Portuguese colony until 1973/74, when it achieved independence after more than a decade of armed struggle. Sri Lanka, formerly known as Ceylon, was 'discovered' by the Portuguese in the early sixteenth century. Portugal had to cede this territory to the Netherlands in 1658, and the Dutch were themselves supplanted by the British in 1796. In any case, one result of Portugal's presence was the emergence of small Luso-Creole communities along the island's east coast and in its north-west. Sri Lanka became independent from British rule in 1948.

Identity Construction and Interethnic Relations
In Guinea-Bissau, various creole categories of people have long coexisted. These include descendants of immigrants from Cape Verde, who can be distinguished from people of Kriston (literally 'Christian') origin (cf. Havik 2004, 2007; Kohl 2009a, 2009b). Creoles number only a few thousand people. The early emer-

gence of Kriston identity is strongly connected with the European-African colonial encounter along the Upper Guinea Coast, as numerous scholars have shown (e.g. Mark 2002; Brooks 2003; Havik 2004; Mark and da Silva Horta 2011). Portuguese navigators began exploring the coastal and riverine regions of present-day Guinea-Bissau in the mid-fifteenth century. Subsequently, European adventurers, delinquents and merchants settled in the area and began to work as commercial middlemen between Africans in the hinterland and European and Cape Verdean businessmen. This turned *praças* – small, isolated Portuguese trading posts connected by maritime links – into exchange hubs for commodities and slaves that served as locations for European-African cultural encounters.

Apart from the Portuguese officials and militaries, Catholic clergymen established themselves in the trading posts with a view to proselytize Africans. Within these *praças,* high levels of interethnic mixture and intermarriages (i.e. a process of cultural creolization) produced new cultural representations and a new common creole identity. Identity among the Kriston communities was ultimately defined by language (a Portuguese-based creole vernacular, nowadays known as Kriol), a distinctive architecture (rectangular houses with verandas) and the Catholic religion (Mark 2002). For instance, *manjuandadi*s – predominantly female associations that provide for sociability and mutual solidarity (Trajano Filho 1998, 2001a, 2001b, 2010; cf. Kohl 2009b, 2012a, 2012b) – have apparently integrated features of both European Christian lay brotherhoods and African age-set organizations (see below). Likewise integrating Portuguese and African features is carnival, which used to be celebrated annually in the former trade settlements (Kohl 2009b). The Kristons, who served as economic, cultural and political brokers for Europeans engaged in commerce, regarded themselves as firstcomers to these trading posts and are widely recognized as such. In the early days, several terms to denote Kristons emerged, some of them persisting until at least the early twentieth century. In use for a long time was the term *grumete* (literally, 'cabin boy'), implying a relation of servitude, whereas *tangomão* – referring to outcasts and renegades involved in riverine trade – had largely disappeared by the late nineteenth century (Havik 2004). Other widely used terms ascribed to Kristons were *filhos da terra* (literally, 'sons of the land') and *cristãos da terra* or 'Christians of the land' (Mark 2002). Historically, Kristons also identified themselves also as 'Portuguese', as they connoted their Catholic faith and fluency in Portuguese or Kriol respectively with 'Portugueseness'.

One strategy Kristons use even nowadays to emphasize their creole descent is toponymical references, by which they associate themselves with one of the former trading posts to indicate their origin, for example by adding *di Bissau* ('from Bissau') or *di Cacheu* ('from Cacheu'). Thus, although Christianity at present is no longer the preserve of creoles, the additive *Kriston di Bolama* ('Christian of Bolama') highlights the individual's or family's creole background in one or several of the former *praças.*

Kriston identity has been transethnic: Kristons have identified with one or another ethnic group inasmuch as Kriston identity served as an additional or umbrella identification for members of other ethnic groups. My recent field research found that creole members of the middle and lower classes who identified with one of the various 'ordinary' ethnic groups inhabiting Guinea-Bissau (notably Pepels, Manjacos, Balantas, Bijagós, Felupes or Mancanhas) simultaneously identified themselves as Kristons or used such expressions as *di Cacheu* or *Kriston di Farim,* mentioned above. By contrast, members of the upper class often tended to negate any ethnic affiliation, thus continuing the colonial practice of negating ethnic affiliation while stressing nationality (formerly 'Portuguese', at present 'Bissau-Guinean'). Nonetheless, fellow citizens (pretend to) know these individuals' or families' ethnic background. The identity of those Kristons who mixed with Cape Verdeans, Europeans and – since the early twentieth century – newly arrived Lebanese is only weakly ethnicized. The Kristons may be described as a category of people rather than a group with a pronounced 'we-consciousness' or 'groupness' (cf. Brubaker 2004) – in contrast to both Bissau-Guinean Cape Verdeans and Kristons de Geba.

Scholars sometimes ignore Kriston identity, considering only Cape Verdean descendants residing in Guinea-Bissau to be creoles (see Schiefer 2002; Ellery Mourão 2009). Historically, Cape Verdeans' identity indeed evolved through a process of cultural creolization in the archipelago off the West African coast. They have settled in Guinea-Bissau for centuries. Whereas members of recently migrated families often keep in touch with their families in the archipelago, other individuals in Cape Verdean families that have resided in the country for generations no longer maintain any familial ties to the islands (Kohl 2009a, forthcoming). Cape Verdean immigration to continental West Africa dates back to the early times of Portugal's presence. Cape Verdean clergymen, traders, soldiers and, in the twentieth century, administrative staff and commercial clerks came to Guinea-Bissau. They often used to intermingle especially with Kristons, but since the late nineteenth century Cape Verdeans have increasingly put emphasis on their distinctiveness (Havik 2004). To this day, many creoles of Cape Verdean descent claim to be more Portuguese, more European and hence more civilized than other inhabitants of Guinea-Bissau, including Kriston descendants, proudly depicting their 'home country' as closer to Europe in terms of sociocultural and economic indicators as well as political stability. To support their claims, some interviewees in Bissau, for example, referred to the Cape Verdean flag, which slightly resembles that of the European Union. To give another example, some of my neighbours of Cape Verdean origin in Guinea-Bissau accused their fellow Bissau-Guineans of being involved in magic and witchcraft, distancing themselves from such practices. However, in numerous informal conversations I found out that many of them themselves engaged in 'superstitious' beliefs and practices

that they publicly rejected. Politically, the Portuguese historically sought to portray Cape Verdeans as their allies, trying to divide the independence movement that engaged many Cape Verdeans. After independence, Cape Verdean politicians were criticized for their strong role in Bissau-Guinean politics, leading to the first successful coup in 1980 (Kohl forthcoming).

As in the Cape Verdean case, the identity of the Kristons de Geba is strongly ethnicized – the ethnonym refers to the now decayed former trading post of Geba in central Guinea-Bissau. The Kristons de Geba regard Geba as their ancestral home, although most of them now reside either in nearby Bafatá or in Bissau. Having traditionally settled in an area populated predominantly by Muslims, they developed a quite strong, non-transethnic ethnic identity, stressing their nominal Christian faith. Unlike other Kristons' identification, their ethnic ascription and self-identification are congruent, and their group cohesion is very pronounced (see Kohl 2009a, 2011a).

Despite these differences, many creoles in Guinea-Bissau continue to stress their historical roles as brokers for the Portuguese, emphasizing their part-European genealogies, urban residence and Christian beliefs and often, in doing so, drawing a boundary between them and the 'uncivilized' (religiously and socially) rural population (Kohl 2009b). Kristons and Cape Verdeans are united by their common fluency in the Luso-Creole Kriol language that emerged along the Upper Guinea Coast in the sixteenth century and has turned into the country's lingua franca in the past forty years (do Couto 1994).[2]

The example of Sri Lanka resembles the Bissau-Guinean case insofar as Sri Lanka is inhabited by various creole groups that refer to different European heritages. Today, they account for less than 1 per cent of the total population and live predominantly in urban environments along the coast. Their origins can be traced back to the times of colonization by the Portuguese, Dutch and British, whose consecutive presence entailed settlement by Europeans, Africans and Indians and, henceforth, the emergence of several coexisting creole communities. The Dutch Burghers were a small but influential minority before losing ground to Sinhalese and Tamils after independence in 1948 (cf. McGilvray 1982; Henry 1986; Roberts, Reheem and Colin-Thomé 1989; Roberts 1994). They pointed extensively to their part-Dutch ancestry and bear mention here only so far as their case facilitates the understanding of the relationship between creoles on the one hand and colonialism and nationalism on the other. My main focus will instead be the Portuguese Burghers (McGilvray 1982, 2007, 2008; Jackson 1990) and the so-called Kaffirs (Jackson 1990; de Silva Jayasuriya 2001, 2003, 2006), as these groups refer to a Luso-Creole space, conceiving of themselves as parts of an intersubjective network. This Luso-Creole space is based on what these groups perceive, style, reinterpret, recontextualize and reify – both consciously and unconsciously – as 'Portuguese', putting forward their Catholic faith, a Luso-

Creole language, a music style known as *Baila* (derived from the Portuguese term for 'dance') and Luso-Creole folk songs and narrations (cf. Jackson 1990, 2005; Sheeran 1997; de Mel 2006).

Once the Portuguese had established commercial contacts with Sri Lanka at the beginning of the sixteenth century, they did not mix solely with the local Sri Lankan population. From about 1630 they also relied on the military and auxiliary assistance of mercenary African soldier-slaves – most of them probably originating from South-Eastern Africa, Madagascar and Ethiopia – whom they supposedly introduced to the island via the Indo-Portuguese settlement of Goa (Boxer 1977; de Mel 2006). While the Portuguese were, for military and imperial ends, open to miscegenation, 'unofficial prejudice … ran much deeper' (Boxer 1977: 303). Eventually, the mixing led to the emergence of diverse *mestiço* (European father and Sri Lankan mother), *castiço* (European father and Eurasian mother), *mulato* (European father and African mother) and *lançado* strata – the latter, Africans, at the bottom of society (Jackson 1990). In this regard, subsequent Dutch and British colonial policies differed much from the Portuguese approach: both Dutch and British took offence to the Portuguese's 'indiscriminately mixing with natives and Africans to effectively inject "inferior" elements of primitivism into the superior and pristine European racial stock and cultural legitimacy', making them responsible for 'producing "degenerate" mixed offspring' (de Mel 2006: 4).

After the British had replaced the Dutch colonial power, the Dutch term *burgher* ('citizen', 'urbanite') – originally limited to those serving the Dutch East India Company – started to denote any people of mixed origin in the island (de Mel 2006). The separation of Dutch from Portuguese Burghers can be located in the nineteenth century. Whereas the Dutch Burghers exposed a 'specifically Anglo, that is, a non-Iberian European pride of race' (Sheeran 1997: 64), those individuals that were to 'become' Portuguese Burghers were believed to lack an 'Anglo-European collective consciousness' (de Mel 2006: 100). Underlining their lower social status, they have been also called 'Mechanics' or 'Mico-Burghers' in reference to their blue-collar professions (as opposed to the white-collar jobs allegedly reserved for the Dutch Burgher group) (McGilvray 1982; de Mel 2006). Nowadays, the Portuguese Burghers are mostly Roman Catholics and are concentrated along the island's east coast around Batticaloa and Trincomalee (McGilvray 1982).

So far, no ethnographic research has been conducted on recent modes and dimensions of interethnic conviviality between the Portuguese Burghers and the rest of Sri Lanka's population, including other creole groups. This lack of research may have to do with the 2004 tsunami disaster – some Portuguese Burgher communities had to resettle in the aftermath of the natural catastrophe – (McGilvray 2007, 2008) and the prolonged civil war that ended only in 2009. In the 1970s, research on the Dutch Burghers revealed that they portrayed themselves as so-

cially more advanced than the Portuguese Burghers, ascribing origins as liberated slaves to the latter and regarding them as 'poorer, darker, more numerous and less European (than themselves)' (McGilvray 1982; cf. Roberts 1994; de Mel 2006). Nevertheless, findings from the early 1970s suggest that 'a strict division between the Dutch and Portuguese Burghers was impossible to sustain' (McGilvray 1982: 237) in social practice. Despite a trend towards endogamy in the 1970s, about a third of the Portuguese Burghers had either a Tamil or Sinhalese partner (Mc-Gilvray 1982) and appeared to speak Sinhalese and Tamil in daily life (cf. Smith 1977). As a result of this integrative pattern, the Portuguese Burghers were to some extent included in the caste ranking, mostly as members of middle-class craftsmen castes (McGilvray 1982). However, while descent, religion and profession appeared to serve as criteria for this ranking, they were nonetheless believed to be an ethnic group rather than a caste (McGilvray 2008). Given the limited ethnographic data, it is not clear how other ethnic groups, notably the Tamils and the dominant Singhalese, currently – after a bloody, politically ethnicized civil war that lasted more than twenty-five years – position against the Portuguese Burghers. Certainly the Buddhist, conservative-traditionalist Singhalese or so-called Arya Sinhala elite take a negative attitude towards creole cultural representations, particularly music, which they condescendingly call *tuppahi* (de Mel 2006) – a term apparently derived from the notion *topazes,* which used to refer to darker skinned people who claimed Portuguese, Christian descent (de Silva 1972).

Well-known Kaffir communities have existed in Puttalam district, about 160 km north of the country's capital of Colombo, along the west coast. Other communities have disappeared, owing to the increasing relocation of Kaffirs to other parts of Sri Lanka over the past hundred years. Moreover, 'exogamy has made the descendants of Afro-Sri Lankans less conspicuous' (de Silva Jayasuriya 2008: 162–63). At present, in terms of professional background, the Kaffirs do not differ from other ethnic groups in Sri Lanka, though the ethnographies on Kaffirs generally leave a non-elite impression. The ethnonym Kaffir derives from terms denoting Africans in various languages, including Portuguese and English, going back to the Arab *kafir,* which was generally applied to 'nonbelievers', that is, non-Muslims. Although the Portuguese had started to transplant Africans to Sri Lanka in the early seventeenth century, present-day Kaffir oral histories rather locate their ancestors' arrival in Sri Lanka in the early nineteenth, when the British reportedly transferred them from South Africa to the island to serve as military auxiliaries. These narratives are partly confirmed by scholarly historical accounts. Altogether, the diverse information suggests various waves of Africans migrating to Sri Lanka for an extended period of time. Having themselves largely integrated into the dominant Sinhalese culture, the Kaffirs continue to stick to Christianity, and the elders particularly are still fluent in the island's Luso-Creole language. Similar to the stereotypes imposed on the Portuguese Burghers, British colonial

prejudices and mostly negative othering used to target Kaffirs due to their dark skin colour (de Mel 2006; de Silva Jayasuriya 2001, 2003, 2006, 2008).

As in the case of Guinea-Bissau among Kristons and Cape Verdeans alike, religion and descent appear to continue to be powerful markers of boundary drawing. Conversely, whereas profession has largely ceased to be a significant marker of difference for Luso-Creole communities in Guinea-Bissau, occupation and social status – at least in the case of the Portuguese Burghers – seemingly continues to play a role in Sri Lanka. However, the sequence of different colonial powers and practices in the case of Sri Lanka – in contrast to the continuous, albeit limited and weak, colonial presence of the Portuguese in Guinea-Bissau – appears to have fostered the separation between Portuguese Burghers and Dutch Burghers. Particularly Victorian othering on phenotypical, 'racial' grounds facilitated the emergence of elite Sinhala rejection of foreign influences and, consequently, creole representations, whereas in Guinea-Bissau the Kristons are, given their transethnic identity, well connected to 'ordinary' ethnic groups. Although Cape Verdean 'superior' attitudes and distancing from other Bissau-Guineans has been politically instrumentalized since late colonial times, the politicization and polarization of ethnicity is much more pronounced in Sri Lanka, affecting also creole culture and identity.

Contributions to National Integration

This essay now turns to the contribution of creole culture and identity to processes of postcolonial nation-building. In Guinea-Bissau, both creole individuals and creole culture and identity as a whole contributed significantly to the struggle for independence and the nation-building that followed independence. Both Cape Verdean and Kriston creoles figured prominently in leadership positions in the independence movement led by the African Party for the Independence of Guinea [-Bissau] and Cape Verde (PAIGC), and they dominated the armed struggle for independent state- and nationhood, as various authors have shown (e.g., Rudebeck 1974; Galli and Jones 1987; Forrest 1992; Dhada 1993). Furthermore, the PAIGC – led by Amílcar Cabral, himself a creole of Cape Verdean ancestry – crafted a powerful, efficient and integrative state ideology. Political frictions, facilitated by the Portuguese to weaken the independence movement, built on the antagonism between Cape Verdeans and the 'native' Bissau-Guinean population, including Kristons. Creoles (and noncreoles as well) were politically divided: many Cape Verdean (and other Bissau-Guinean) activists demanded an independent binational Cape Verdean-Bissau-Guinean state, whereas others vehemently opposed a binational solution; another cluster rather favoured autonomy within Portugal's empire.

After independence, the above-mentioned transethnic character of Kriston identity and culture led the women's organization of the victorious PAIGC to use selected representations of creole culture, such as *manjuandadi*s, to mobilize

the female population. In colonial times, *manjuandadi*s were found only at the former trading posts, fostering conviviality and mutuality among their predominantly female members. Nowadays, the diversified character of these institutions is underlined by the highly visible music performances of some *manjuandadi*s in particular. Ranging from formalized associations to less institutionalized networks of coworkers, neighbours, kin and friends, *manjuandadi*s have since the 1960s also spread to the Muslim population – albeit some elite (Christian) cultural activists do not regard the latter as *manjuandadi*s but rather as mere 'groups'. *Manjuandadi*s are often associated with specific ethnic groups, as they frequently recruit members from family or neighbourhood networks dominated by a specific ethnicity; nevertheless, most of them are multiethnic. Numerous *manjuandadi*s share characteristics with commercially popular rotating credits and savings associations. Semantically, meanwhile, the age-set organizations that are common in rural, agriculture-dominated communities are also increasingly referred to as *manjuandadi*s.

In the long run, these representations have contributed to interethnic integration – transethnicization – by fostering nation-building 'from below'. The postcolonial state that envisioned a new, integrated national culture developed 'from above' has in fact ignited a 'bottom-up' nation-building process. Political and economic liberalization since the late 1980s has led to the commodification of *manjuandadi*s, some of which have become professional bands for hire. The popularity of the *manjuandadi* music genre and the associations' mutuality accelerated their further spread throughout the country (for detailed ethnographic elaborations, see Trajano Filho 1998; Kohl 2009b, 2012b). Similarly, the Luso-Creole language Kriol, hitherto spoken only by small, largely creole communities in the *praças,* began to spread country-wide from the 1920s in an expansion unsuccessfully countered by the colonial authorities. This process was likewise accelerated by the independence movement, which used Kriol as the language of instruction and command. Since independence Kriol has transformed into the country's lingua franca, fostered by the state and its representatives across the country and in the audio media (cf. Kohl 2009b, 2011b, 2012b). According to the latest census, conducted in 2009, about 90 per cent of Guinea-Bissau's population is fluent in Kriol.

Data on Sri Lanka is limited. Most Dutch Burghers opposed Ceylon's independence from the United Kingdom, but nothing is known about the attitudes of Portuguese Burghers and Kaffirs. Dutch Burghers feared marginalization, given the power of exclusive Sinhala nationalism. Indeed, once independence was achieved, the Dutch Burghers' exposure to the 'Sinhala Only' policy and its excluding measures led some of them to migrate to Australia, Canada and the United Kingdom (Henry 1986; Brohier 1998). However, this process apparently also led to a redrawing of intercreole boundaries, resulting in a temporary and partial closing of ranks between Dutch and Portuguese Burghers. As regards

nation-building 'from below', the Portuguese Burghers and Kaffirs of Sri Lanka are widely believed to be the founders of *Baila*, which has been one of the most popular music styles in Sri Lanka since the 1950s (Sheeran 1997; de Mel 2006).

The origins of modern *Baila* can be located in *Kafirinha* and *Chicothi,* originally cultivated by Portuguese Burghers. *Kafirinha* in particular was a style of music and dance that in the nineteenth century was closely associated with poor working-class people in urban settings, including Portuguese Burghers and Kaffirs. Because these groups were of mixed ancestry, *Kafirinha* was subject to 'racialization' and stigmatization by the traditionalist Sri Lankan elite, who tended to identify with Europe. They continue to ascribe African origins to *Kafirinha* today, associating it with 'savageness' and 'brutishness' (Jackson 1990; Sheeran 1997), even though *Kafirinha* is – despite its name – predominantly an 'Iberian-influenced vocal and dance music' expression (de Mel 2006: 101). However, Sri Lankans seldom acknowledge African influences in contemporary Sri Lankan culture (Alpers 2012: 72). However, while *Kafirinha* continues to be cultivated among Portuguese Burgher and Kaffir communities, it also emerged as Sri Lanka's popular *Baila* music more generally (Jackson 1990; Sheeran 1997).

Following the introduction of radio broadcasting in the 1930s, the marginalized Luso-Creole music experienced a revival that was also influenced by the popularization of 'Western', 'Latin'-tinged music on the radio, especially Calypso. Influenced by the West, urbanized Sinhalese known as Samkara Sinhala became fans of Portuguese Burgher music that subsequently transformed into *Waade* (or *Debate Baila*) and the even more popular *Chorus Baila*, integrating influences from Calypso and Global North rock and pop music 'while retaining traditional elements of verbal repartee from Chikothi and … Kaffringna' (de Mel 2006: 240). Different from Calypso, amongst others, creole music was not considered 'foreign', at least not by the Samkara Sinhala – in contrast to the Arya Sinhala elite, who considered this supposedly *tuppahi* and insipid music a vestige of colonialism and racial miscegenation that betrayed Sri Lankan cultural values (de Mel 2006). Although *Baila* is nowadays considered an apolitical, 'light' music style, some *Baila*s of the 1950s also 'covered a variety of topics that served the Sinhala nationalist cause' (Sheeran 1997: 126). Likewise, some interpreters composed *Baila*s as war songs in the 1990s, when the island was increasingly drawn into a civil war that has often been characterized as an 'ethnic conflict' between the dominant Sinhalese majority and the Tamils. Since the 1970s, *Baila* has been increasingly sung in Sinhalese and has spread across the country, taking on characteristics of commodification. Despite rejections by the elite, Burghers, Samkara Sinhala and the Sri Lankan diaspora widely regard modern *Baila* as 'an emblem of intra-cultural cohesion' (de Mel 2006: 241).

As for the Luso-Creole language, it long ago lost its role as a countrywide lingua franca, which it held up to the nineteenth century. It was replaced by Sinhalese as the island's dominant language, followed by Tamil in the early twentieth

century; meanwhile, English continues to play an important role as a language of education and trade. Today the Luso-Creole language, relegated to a niche existence even among Portuguese Burghers along the east coast and Kaffir communities in Puttalam district, runs the risk of disappearing.

Conclusion

The research on Luso-Creole identities' significance in processes of interethnic and national integration is still in its infancy. I have examined how 'creole' and 'creolization' can be conceptualized as analytical tools serving comparative purposes and framed the notion 'Luso-Creole' as a cross-cultural analytical term. However, the comparison remains incomplete because historical data and ethnographic findings are still disparate and fragmentary in both historical and contemporary perspectives.

Nevertheless, some preliminary conclusions may be drawn concerning the evolution, appropriation and transformation of the Luso-Creole heritage in different settings, illustrated by the examples of Guinea-Bissau and Sri Lanka. Both countries are characterized by the hierarchical coexistence of creole groups who have manifested their supposedly higher social status by alluding to 'European civilization' and 'manners'. Whereas many Cape Verdeans continue to distance themselves from other Bissau-Guineans, including even Kristons, the latter similarly draw a line between the noncreole population and themselves, portrayed as more European, that is, 'Portuguese'. In Sri Lanka, Dutch Burghers look down on both Portuguese Burghers and Kaffirs, ascribing them a socioculturally inferior status due to their 'Iberian-ness', whereas the country's Singhalese elite regard creoles of any kind as 'alien' and subordinate. Sri Lankan society thus appears to be much more stratified and polarized: creoles are relegated to a second row while creole identities are comparatively manifest (contrary to the complex Kriston case) owing to Dutch and British colonialism that favoured sociocultural closure and distinction more than did the Portuguese variety.

Politically, differences are apparent: in the case of Guinea-Bissau, Luso-Creole groups tended to welcome independence, whereas Dutch and probably Portuguese Burghers in Sri Lanka took a critical stance towards independent statehood, fearing social marginalization. Despite their numerical inferiority, creole groups have, as the examples of Guinea-Bissau and Sri Lanka illustrate, contributed various cultural representations to national popular culture. In Guinea-Bissau, these include *manjuandadi* associations, amongst other features that used to be restricted to tiny Luso-Creole groups but have, since the eve of independence, transcended ethnic and religious boundaries and spread nationwide. This process was facilitated by the transethnic, inclusive character of Kriston identity and fuelled by the post-independence one-party socialist state, which sought mass mobilization of the population. Guinea-Bissau has been characterized by an inte-

grative state ideology that conceives of the nation as an umbrella covering various ethnic groups. The Sri Lankan case is quite different. *Baila* has contributed to national culture, but other creole influences remain marginal and have added little to postcolonial nation-building, not least because Sri Lanka is marked by an exclusive and militant pro-Sinhalese nation-and-state ideology emanating from political and intellectual representatives of a Sinhala majority that strictly seeks to differ 'genuine' Sri Lankan from 'imported' *tuppahi* traditions.

Further research, especially in Sri Lanka, may reveal how 'micro-politics' and 'policies' influence Luso-Creole identity construction and maintenance, how interethnic conviviality is practised in everyday life, and how creoles actively contextualize and reify their supposed 'Portugueseness'. In this regard, comparative ethnographic bottom-up research may improve understanding of which factors allow for creole boundary drawing and conceptualization of 'Portugueseness'.

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Notes

1. Findings for Guinea-Bissau are based on both ethnographic findings (of research conducted in 2006–07 and 2013) and literature research. Data on Sri Lanka have been extracted from existing scholarly literature.
2. The Cape Verdean Windward variety of Kriol differs only slightly from the one spoken in Guinea-Bissau.

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Chapter 3

Freetown's Yoruba-Modelled Secret Societies as Transnational and Transethnic Mechanisms for Social Integration

Nathaniel King

Introduction

Sierra Leone's history supplies the basis for understanding the geographical, psychological, emotional and political macro- and micro-fields on which the current significance of Freetown's secret societies is being played out. Some of the contexts are divided by centuries, but all these periods are swathed in enduring issues of identity, integration and power, among others, that are still relevant today.

In 1787, a humanitarian organization, Society for the Black Poor, mobilized resources and the British government's approval for the first repatriation of a group of ex-slaves to Africa. The efforts aimed not at returning them to their specific geographical homelands in West Central Africa, Bights of Benin, Bights of Biafra and the Gold Coast but at settling them in places considered similar to the settlements from which they and their ancestors had been uprooted by the slave trade. The current territory of Freetown was that chosen settlement, and the first set of repatriated slaves was called the Original Settlers (Peterson 1969; Alie 1990).

Although Britain had pronounced an official end to the trade in slaves and slavery in 1807 and 1833, respectively (Ashcroft, Griffiths and Tiffin 2000), abolition was not generally enforced in all the areas where these practices were active. Britain accepted control of the coastal area where Freetown currently sits and declared it a Crown Colony in 1808.

On the waters of the new colony, Britain intercepted ships that flouted the abolition orders, redirected them to the colony and freed the intended slaves into the community of already resettled ex-slaves. The first members of this later group, known as the Recaptives or Liberated Africans, including many captives from Nigeria, were brought in in 1808. On their resettlement in Sierra Leone,

the Recaptives maintained their original identities and practices, largely unadulterated (Peterson 1969: 162; Fyfe 1993 [1962]: 184–87, 292). The communing of these settlers from various parts of Africa – people with similar but also varied experiences – led to a fusion of identities 'through a process of creolization' (Knörr 2010: 206) and the formation of a new community, the Creole community.

An important aspect of that early Freetown Creole community was its secret societies and one of their public realizations, masquerades.[1] Peterson (1969), who chronicled Freetown's early history, notes that upon its introduction to the colony around 1850, Agugu, a secret society with roots in Nigeria, was embraced by Creoles and other ethnic groups of Sierra Leone, and by Moslems and Christians alike (Peterson 1969: 267). He contends that it gained traction because of its 'apparent efficacy' (ibid.: 266–67). Yet that easy acceptance can also be explained by the fact that the Agugu fitted with already existing practices of both the composite groups of resettled slaves and other Sierra Leone ethnic groups. The apparent Agugu-created unity lasted as long as it was the only secret society of the new community's members. Once another secret society with Nigerian bases, the Hunters secret society (formed mainly to hunt wild animals) had emerged, the latter and the Agugu entered into contestations about which was more representative of members of the new community (ibid.: 268–69). As a result, both societies increasingly leaned towards exclusivity. That tendency meant that large sections of the Freetown community, Creole and non-Creole, were unable to become members of either the Agugu or the Hunters. The latter's members progressively portrayed themselves as superior and their society as their answer to Masonic Lodges (ibid.: 269).

Those contested claims catalysed reconstructions of 'we' and 'they' groupness, even in non-secret-society matters.[2] They also had implications for the formation of a new secret society, a cross between the two older societies that enfolded those they had rejected and marginalized: the Odelay. The first Odelay, a term that translates as 'Lord a Mercy', was formed between 1950 and 1952. It became the secret society of poor men, women and young people – long-term urban residents and migrants from Sierra Leone's interior, members of the Creole group and members of other ethnic groups – who lacked the qualifications to become members of the then exclusive Agugu and Hunters. Today, more than 150 Odelays modelled on that first Odelay operate as independent organizations with their own executives. Odelays are still meeting places for the poor and marginalized in society, but they are now distinct from the first Odelay in that socio-economically and politically powerful Sierra Leoneans and non-Sierra Leoneans have become members.

In Sierra Leone, secret societies are organizations whose internal workings and activities tend to be closed to nonmembers. Members often say that their secrets are accessible only to members, and threaten harm to nonmembers who try to learn their secrets by stealth. Sierra Leone's secret societies can be classified

into old urban societies (e.g. the Agugu and Hunters), new urban societies (like Odelays) and traditional secret societies. Except for Odelays, all of them are, for the most part, specific to a single sex. Some of them focus their activities on entertainment, some on medicine, some on prestige, and so on. However, many of these sodalities, at different times and to varying degrees, combine two or more such emphases. Odelays are mostly urban phenomena, peculiar to Freetown and the big towns of Sierra Leone's interior. While membership of traditional secret societies in the hinterland is compulsory, membership of Freetown's old and new urban secret societies is not compulsory; rather, it is a matter of strategic or tactical choice.

All Freetown-based secret societies with historical links to Yorubaland in Nigeria, notwithstanding their secrets-embedded core, have a public side in the form of their public masquerade performances. In this context, a 'masquerade' is a mask-wearing figure that symbolizes the spirit and essence of a secret society and leads its public performance. That masked figure is normally called a 'devil'.[3] In addition, all members of Yoruba-based urban secret societies publicize their masquerades as embodying the medicine mystique. Therefore, masquerades are a nexus of visible and invisible powers and urban secret societies' public performances. As agreed between the providers of the information I discuss here and myself, I do not present pictures of these masquerades.[4]

The Formation of Odelays and the Linguistic Nigerian Connections

All of Freetown's older urban secret societies set minimal thresholds of socioeconomic attainment and appropriate family connections for aspiring members.[5] When some of the urban poor succeeded in gaining membership in the Agugu and Hunters, their mobility within them was often limited by their un-illustrious backgrounds because placement and progress within those sodalities were effectively elitist (i.e. determined by affluence and family ties). Freetown's new secret societies responded to this exclusion and limitation by opening their membership to Freetown's disadvantaged, irrespective of geographical background, socioeconomic standing or family pedigree. Odelays are the most important of these sodalities. All of Freetown's Odelays share a common history of earlier exclusion and historical connection to the first Odelay, whose emergence I will recount below.

Modelled on the Agugu and Hunters societies, an Odelay is a cross between the two. In fact, my informants clarified that the term Odelay means 'small Ode': 'Ode' is the name of the Hunters' masquerade, and '-lay' is a diminutive suffix in the Yoruba argot that typifies Freetown's secret societies. Nunley asserts that Odelays came into being in mid-twentieth-century Freetown as a response to the demands of the time (Nunley 1987: 60). He goes on to present the realities of overpopulation in Freetown at the time due to a surge of migrants from Sierra Le-

one's interior, and the resulting poor economic and health conditions and vices. He also notes the rootlessness those migrants experienced and the need they felt for some sort of urban belonging. Abdullah Honwana and de Boeck (2005), acknowledging Nunley (1987: 176), say that 'the exclusionary cultural landscape in Freetown' occasioned the emergence of the Odelay as an alternative urban space to occupy and perform in.

Urban secret societies' role in granting social integration to Freetown's disadvantaged was attractive to prospective members of these newer secret societies. Odelays therefore developed into receptacles – as they still are – for (potential) rejects and marginalized members of the older Agugu and Hunters societies. Pertinently, as Low (1996: 384), discussing the significance of cities for differing claimants, points out, 'The city as a site for everyday practices provides valuable insights into the linkages of the macroprocesses with the texture and fabric of human experience'.

A major conflict sprang up between older urban secret societies and newer Odelays over active claims the latter's members made that their masquerades were 'devils'. Many members of the Agugu and Hunters were united in their view of Odelays as mere pretenders to secret society status, challengers to their secret society hegemony. These rhetorical, sometimes real conflicts persisted during my research.

Despite these conflicts, members of *Agugu, Hunters* and *Odelay* societies share a functional commonality: they all use a version of the (Nigerian) Yoruba language in both secret and nonsecret societal activities. (Yoruba are not one of Sierra Leone's ethnic groups, but words and expressions from the Yoruba language, traceable to the Recaptives, still exist in Sierra Leone's lingua franca, Creole.) My research showed that the use of Yoruba, often selective, increased the mystique of the new societies and was also a strategy that gave immediacy to their claims to have Nigerian origins. These selected words, phrases and expressions are different from the familiar ones in Sierra Leone's Creole language. Secret society members often – apparently consciously – switch from the easily understandable Creole to the Yoruba-charged variety in a purpose-dictated diglossia.[6] I found out that the key possession was not knowledge of Yoruba (the donor language) itself, but rather mastery of important expressions used to index secret society exclusivity. I also noted that the secret society members within my study areas used Yoruba argot-laden Creole to make a social statement and maintain their group's boundary.

On balance, knowledge and use of Yoruba or some expressions and words from it, and claims to the Yoruba connection seem to give members of Odelay organizations a sense of rootedness in both Sierra Leone and one of the biggest ethnic groups in the 'big brother', Nigeria. It came across during my interviews that membership of these Yoruba-based organizations made up for deficits in individual members' social standing and relative lack of in-country socioeconomic success. Nigeria's comparative prosperity in the West Africa subregion seemingly

provides them with not only the roots of respectability, but, by default, a distant but present canopy of care. It is also important to note that the use of Yoruba makes the workings of these secret societies inscrutable to nonmembers, and that they found their esoteric medicinal power on those grounds. Yet, arguably, this ever-present possibility of establishing prestigious external roots through membership of these organizations is related to differing conceptualizations of Sierra Leone nationhood, which I examine next.

The Bifurcated Sierra Leone Nation(s)

Nationhood in Sierra Leone is an artefact of the country's history and present realities. Until 1896, the term Sierra Leone referred only to the area currently known as Freetown. From the late nineteenth century on, however, Sierra Leone consisted of two de facto nations: the colony and the hinterland. Today, membership of Odelays has become a bridge across these two 'nations'.

The organization that took over the running of the colony of ex-slaves and Recaptives from the humanitarians was called the Sierra Leone Company. Its main responsibility was to make the new settlement viable and the settler community self-sustaining in the long run. The Crown Colony declared by the British in 1808 lay over what is currently Freetown. One of the reasons given for the declaration was that the Sierra Leone Company 'could not succeed as a commercial venture' (Peterson 1969: 34). The declaration of the Crown Colony meant that the inhabitants of the colony were British subjects while the interior was a different sovereign sphere, with its own people and leaders. In reality, though, the interior functioned as an appendage to the declared Crown Colony. The hinterland's natural resources, like groundnuts, effectively financed the running of the smaller Crown Colony (Fyfe 1993 [1962]). That larger interior then was a nominal 'Protectorate', loosely and insidiously policed by the Frontier Police Force, which was charged with keeping watch over the British frontier in Sierra Leone. As Fyfe notes, 'The protected area, sometimes called the "Protectorate", though as yet no Protectorate was officially proclaimed, was not subject to British jurisdiction' (Fyfe 1993[1962]: 487).

Britain's formalization of control over the Protectorate was given impetus by France's hot pursuit of the warrior Samori Touré and his troops in the area that is present-day Guinea, after the marauding troops had entered an area of nominal British control. The wording of the resulting formalization points to the bifurcation of nation or nations referred to in the heading of this sub-section, arguing:

> The Foreign Jurisdiction Act of 1890, consolidating a series of earlier acts, empowered the Crown to exercise any jurisdiction as if by right of cession or conquest. An Order-in-Council of August the 28th 1895 de-

clared that the Crown had acquired jurisdiction in foreign countries adjoining the Colony. On August the 31st 1896 a Protectorate was formally proclaimed, as 'being best for the people'… (Fyfe 1993 [1962]: 541)

This shows that the distinction between Freetown on the one hand and Sierra Leone beyond Freetown on the other is a geopolitical and sociocultural division rooted in colonial history. This division informed realizations and constructions of exclusion, marginality and margins – with Sierra Leone's interior being at the margins imaginary of the Sierra Leone nation (Richards 1996). Vivek Srivastava and Marco Larizza (2011), referring to Hanlon (2005) and Kieh (2005), have also observed that 'the areas outside Freetown had traditionally been excluded and marginalized'.

The bifurcated nation not only shaped relationships between people in the city and people in (or from) the interior for a long time, but also tellingly bred discourses of 'Freetonians' versus 'people from "up country"' or 'those who were here [Freetown]' and 'those who came' (i.e. migrants from the interior). My research indicates that membership of an Odelay was a means for 'people from up country' to become 'Freetonians', and for marginal actors to identify as members of a Sierra Leonean nation. Freetown's 'secret society belt' is and has been an area where these twin happenings occur.

The foregoing demonstrates that histories, official policies, lived realities and actors' determination to exert their social relevance against many odds shaped the conceptions of and reactions to Sierra Leone's nation imaginary. They also created stages where these issues were played out. Because resettled ex-slaves, Recaptives, migrants from the Sierra Leone's interior and poor Freetown residents found it hard to succeed in broader society, I argue, they built backstage secret societies to gain a foothold on the frontstage of broader Freetown society. Therefore, we can understand the enduring significance of Yoruba-based secret societies, especially Odelays, by situating them in Goffman's frame of stages.[7]

Abolition of the slave trade and slavery worked together with British colonial policy to bring people from many parts of Africa to what later became the Sierra Leone Colony. A shared history enabled them to draw on Yoruba-based societies as joint possessions (inherited common backstages). Yet, as time went on, these organizations' inclusivity metamorphosed into exclusivity, prompting the formation of perceivably more inclusive 'grass-roots' organizations like Odelays. Many of Freetown's poor and mainly migrant populations who lacked the backstages of family pedigree and bequeathed wealth, for example, became members of Odelay organizations and used them as backstages, fortified by secrets, to give themselves relevance on Freetown's front stages. But actors on the newer urban secret society backstages also made use of other backstages of shared history and Yoruba origins to (re)connect with older urban secret societies such as the Agugu

and Hunters. That hindmost backstage, as we shall see in the next sections, gave members of the first Odelay grounds to contest the older secret societies.

Freetown's Secret Society Belt and the 'Lord a Mercy' Odelay Prototype Story

The area I refer to as the secret society belt covers some of the most heavily populated communities in Freetown, such as Fourah Bay, Kroo Bay and Foulah Town. Many of the belt's residents are migrants from other areas, including Sierra Leone's interior. It is instructive that these migrant-heavy areas have the highest concentration of Yoruba-modelled secret societies, especially Odelay organizations.

Many poor migrants from Sierra Leone's interior and less well-off Freetonians such as those marginalized in or from older urban secret societies used membership of Odelay secret societies jointly for urban social integration. It was also instrumental in generating fear-born respect and acceptance from other Sierra Leoneans whose status derived from sources other than Odelay secret societies. Membership of these societies offers places of abode, jobs, job promotions and support in times of pressing need. Now, the entertainment value of *Odelays* is becoming merely incidental.

Nunley (1987) refers to the post-World War II years as the period of Odelays' conception. Old members of Odelay societies and nonmembers alike corroborated this in my interviews. Nunley further regards Alikalis as the prototype of Odelays (Nunley 1987: 51). Alikalis were ragtag Freetown boys' societies of the 1940s and 1950s. Their members were noted for their proclivity for violence and crime, including theft. My informants held that Alikalis' defining image was that of their typically jobless members stealing from onlookers and residents in the areas their masquerades passed through. Nunley's (ibid.) observation that members of Alikalis were called 'wharf rats' illustrates the perceived general criminality of these groups' members. One of my informants summed up the Alikalis' objectives as 'wanting to mount a one-day show which raised eyebrows and some cash, mainly illicitly'. Importantly, old Alikali members whom I spoke to did not claim Alikalis were secret societies. I further learned that Alikalis never rose above being mainly disparate juvenile groups. Therefore, many of my informants argued against the view that Alikalis were potentially Odelays' prototype, as their objectives differed from the goals driving what evolved into Odelays. Alikalis were really forerunners to Odelays, not their prototype.

From my findings, I can deduce that the emergence of 'Lord a Mercy' was a summary of the issues, actions and actors that engendered the Odelay phenomenon. Formed in the 1950s, Lord a Mercy had a membership like that of the Alikalis: mainly unemployed young people and others living in precarious situations.[8] Although Lord a Mercy had some 'wharf rats', it was a shade above Alikalis because its chief characteristic was not crime but its members' aspiration

to make it a creditable alternative to Agugu and Hunters societies in Freetown's secret society landscape. It was like an Alikali without the overt criminal content.

At its founding, Lord a Mercy was led by a Christian Creole who was a member of both Hunters and Agugu secret societies but came from a poor family and thus had little chance of attaining a controlling role in them. That Creole leader had the respect of many young men, especially non-Creole migrants from the country's interior who hoped to become members of a secret society in Freetown. The majority of these young men were unqualified for membership into the two older Yoruba-modelled societies because they were poor and jobless, and lacked reputable backgrounds or the requisite metaphorical backstages. Some carried the baggage of being past members of the hugely discreditable Alikalis. They therefore rallied around the Christian Creole man to 'build their own devil' in the Brookfields and Saint John areas of central Freetown. The Lord a Mercy masquerade's maiden public appearance by itself contested the established order and was thus a source of tension between the members of this group and those of the Agugu and Hunters societies.

This first Lord a Mercy public performance took place on a public holiday when other established urban secret societies also performed.[9] More challengingly, the Lord a Mercy masquerade looked just like the older Hunters' masquerade. Members had themselves composed most of their songs for that first public outing, but they also sang some Yoruba songs more commonly associated with the Hunters. More, the group incensed the older societies by calling their masquerade a 'devil'. Clearly, the new group was tapping the resources of a Creole secret society insider (their leader), albeit a marginalized one, to make itself recognized. Members of the Agugu and Hunters saw this new reality as an affront to their medicine-mystique hegemony. Consequently, they made a stand to chasten the perceived dangerous idlers and discourage Lord a Mercy's continuance. It is rumoured that during that first performance, members of the Agugu and Hunters, drawing on their common Yoruba origins, united and used magical powers to unsettle the new masquerade and its followers; but the Creole leader of the group, who stood in front of the masquerade drawing on that same Yoruba backstage, rendered the assaulting powers ineffectual on the frontstage of social contestation for urban recognition. Subsequently the challenge became physical, as young members of the older societies fought with those of the new group.

Lord a Mercy was not the group's original name. One informant said it had carried the name of its Creole founder. Two others said the group had not had a name, adding that its name came from the physical violence of the street fights in that first outing, in which members of both sides sustained serious injuries. Reportedly, supporters of the older secret societies came off worse. Reprisals continued throughout central Freetown as members of the new group attacked the older sodalities' perceived members and sympathizers with sticks and broken bottles. It was reported that during the fighting, some Freetown residents who

had been traumatized by the just-ended Second World War and the many violent economic-stringency-related strikes in Freetown shouted in desperation and resignation from their verandas and behind trellised windows, 'Lord a mercy! Lord a mercy O!' (i.e. May the Lord have mercy on us!). That was how the group got its name – which it maintained, because of the fear and attendant forced recognition that accidental moniker had generated.

Lord a Mercy's story shows that violence is a resource used by claimants of rights to space in the city, especially when other means are obviated. This gives credence to Holston's view that 'people use violence to make claims on the city and use the city to make violent claims' (1999: 16). On today's Freetown secret societies stage, Lord a Mercy is not one of the five largest Odelay organizations. Still, many of its members and members of other Odelay organizations believe that Lord a Mercy, by mounting an alternative trans-secret societal outfit, aesthetically so similar yet compositionally so different from the established secret societies in the city, was seminal to the now flourishing Odelay phenomenon.

I argue that widespread poverty among society's disadvantaged had weakened the national embrace. This informed the formation of Odelays and inspired the disadvantaged to draw on backstages of secret societies and transnational connections to succeed on the frontstage of open society in Freetown and even Sierra Leone. The thesis of the weak national embrace could be linked to what I consider to be a community of shared lived realities and circumstances, considered next.

Urban Secret Societies and the Community of Shared Lived Realities

Guided by my findings, I analyse nationhood from a perspective of shared lived realities and circumstances. A community of shared lived realities and circumstances, I maintain, bonded members of the early Creole community that evolved from freed slaves. Odelays emerged in the 1950s, when the divide between the interior and the capital had not yet been bridged. Since Sierra Leone was still putatively understood as Freetown, I argue that the emergence of Odelays was a route to the nation imaginary.[10] Young migrants from the provinces and the urban unemployed and unemployable became members of Odelays. Pointedly, many of the first executive members of Freetown Odelays were not Creoles but came from ethnic groups of the hinterland.[11]

Sometimes, membership of Odelays has been a platform from which some members launched bids to be inducted into the relatively high-standing Agugu and Hunters societies. Currently, all three sodalities share complementarities of mutual memberships, aesthetics and songs, and use the same Yoruba argot. In addition, all three organizations' members refer to their societies using the Yoruba generic term Awo, which has two meanings: (1) an esoteric-medicinal brotherhood/community, and (2) the spirit that all Yoruba-modelled secret societies jointly lay claim to.

A community of shared lived realities and circumstances feeds on, and is in turn fed by, a community of history. The resulting mutual reinforcements inform the fellow-feeling that Odelay members show to one another and to members of other Yoruba-modelled secret societies like the Agugu and Hunters. This fellow-feeling for a secret society member, I maintain, cuts across political party and ethnic sensibilities in Freetown in particular and Sierra Leone in general. Awo is thus the transnational, invoked to valorize the Sierra Leonean. Yoruba-modelled secret society fellow-feeling is thus an infrastructure that could be argued to (1) promote nationhood, (2) undermine nationhood or (3) (re)present an alternative to nationhood.

Because membership of Yoruba-modelled urban secret societies binds Sierra Leoneans from across varied divides, this membership summons a fervour that the official nation does not necessarily muster. To test the strength of an urban secret society's fellow-feeling for its own members in relation to others, I asked fifty-five members of Odelays the following question: 'If you were in a public position of trust and you had a job to offer, whom would you give it to: a member of your secret society or a non-member?' All of the respondents answered that they would give the job to a fellow Yoruba-based secret society member. The responses to follow-up questions were also remarkable. I asked, 'If you found out that two people came forward for this same job and that the person who was not a member of your secret society was qualified, while your fellow secret society member was not, whom would you give the job to?' Forty-seven said they would give the job to the unqualified secret society member – male or female. Many of them clarified that they would feel safe(r) working with a fellow secret society member, adding that they saw it as a moral imperative 'to help a society brother or sister'. Respondents also said that they 'would qualify' the fellow secret society member once he or she got the job. All of this shows that shared secret society memberships substitute other considerations like merit, ability and ethnic background.

An Odelay elder told me the following story, which could explain the fastness of the bond. In the 1960s a highly placed member of the then ruling political party in Sierra Leone was finding it difficult to gain enough support for his party in the secret society belt. Though he was a member of the exclusive Agugu, he was not a member of any Odelay. Still, though, the politician calculatedly sought to gain the support his party badly needed in that contested, votes-rich area through Odelays and other Yoruba-modelled secret societies by liberally preaching the common histories of the secret societies and the mutually possessed Awo.

The relative ease of gaining membership of Odelays – which is not based on socioeconomic or family status – meant that this politician would benefit from the huge 'vote banks' (Das and Poole 2005) in the secret society belt. The government official's political party was not, according to the elder who narrated this story to me, the party that many members of the Odelay had been

supporting. But he and his fellow members of Odelays eventually supported the highly-placed government official, the elder explained, summarizing why Odelay and cognate Yoruba societies had made common cause with fellow secret society members: 'We supported the "highly-placed official" because Awo does not know difference in party or tribe; it demands that we support a fellow secret society brother and fight for him as a body. Everywhere he cries, we cry with him [whenever he has a need of whatever sort, we rush to his aid]'.

This 'common cause with kind' feature of urban secret societies marks a strand of association that transcends the generally recognized group identities of ethnic group and nationality in Freetown. Importantly, the strength and utility of that bond go against the state's refrain of the nation being the prime source of mobilization. Members of Odelays do not eschew the nation; they craft mechanisms below the level of the nation to invigorate their claim to nationhood in Sierra Leone. Because Odelays are transethnic, trans-social and transnational groups in both their origins and their current standings, they embrace members across countries and across nationalities as well. Odelays' pastiche-like character gives the organizations roots, trunks and branches in many places and makes them simultaneously a local and global phenomenon. They are resources that bear fruit as well.

How the Transnational Awo Affects Family Ties and Unifies Perceived Enemies

How does the Awo bond affect the biological family? To find answers, I asked relatives of diasporans who had returned to Sierra Leone in 2008 for public performances of their Odelay organizations for their views on diasporans' relationship with the Odelays they belonged to. This view, from a sister of one of the diasporans, was typical:[12] 'My brother has been with his Odelay [meaning, the organization and/or its masquerade] since he was a boy. So, when he went overseas he never forgot about it. He supports his Odelay. From what I understand, his Odelay brothers helped him to become strong [successful] over there [in the United States]'.[13]

However, some relatives of diasporans expressed concern that their relatives in the diaspora paid more attention to their Odelays than they did to their families in Sierra Leone. One respondent could not hide his distress and pointed to his and his younger brother's poverty. Calling that younger brother forward so that I could see him, he said, 'Just look at us. He does not pay attention to us. When he comes to Sierra Leone, he gives all his money to his "devil"'. The younger brother nodded his head in agreement, interjecting, 'That is how he treats us, his own blood'. At the end of my interview, I asked the older brother whether he and his indigent brother planned to become members of the Odelay organization their brother in

the diaspora belonged to. After some reflection, he concluded, 'Maybe. We will think about it. Maybe that is the way we can benefit from our brother.'

The discussions above show that in Freetown and even in Sierra Leone at large, membership of secret societies, including Odelays, is increasingly the basis on which material and nonmaterial resources are mobilized, negotiated and allocated. It is below the nation, but it shapes the official nation and the traditionally familial.

Because Odelay memberships are mainly founded on shared lived experiences and informed spaces, Odelays can also be spaces of transnational interaction, where similarity can be fabricated out of or in spite of difference, even difference from perceived enemies. In the following I examine how an Odelay performance became a platform on which allies in Sierra Leone's civil war, including Nigerian soldiers, 'danced devil' with their adversaries – rebels they had been fighting against for years.

The Sierra Leonean Foday Sankoh was head of the Revolutionary United Front rebels that launched Sierra Leone's civil war from Liberia in 1991. Decades before he started the war, Sankoh reportedly became a member of a Freetown Odelay, Civili Rule, though apparently not a very active member. In the mid 1990s, when Sierra Leone's soldiers proved incapable of thwarting the rebels' advance, the government requested help from a regional West African body, the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). The majority of soldiers in that intervention force were Nigerian. Many of the Nigerian contingent of the ECOWAS Monitoring Group (ECOMOG) became members of Freetown's Yoruba-modelled secret societies like the Agugu, Hunters and Odelays, including Civili Rule. I was told that the Yoruba soldiers had been impressed by some of the urban secret society members' use of Yoruba words and expressions, and actually spoke pidgin Yoruba, so to speak, with them.

On 27 April 2000, Foday Sankoh paid to carry the Civili Rule Odelay's symbolic gun – the *bila* gun – just outside the Odelay's headquarters.[14] Informants told me that Sankoh effectively played the socioeconomic youth card to carry the gun, arguing that he had started the civil war to empower youth and now wanted to use a mass youth phenomenon, the Civili Rule Odelay masquerade's performance, to announce his intentions to end the civil war.[15]

During that Civili Rule public performance, soldiers of Sierra Leone's national army and the regional fighting group wore coloured clothes – a secret society requirement for taking part in the masquerade's public performance. In this festive atmosphere, the soldiers mixed with the chief protagonist of the war, Sankoh, and his fighters – with whom they were technically still at war. The masquerade's dance was a national ceasefire dance performed on urban grounds to make a statement to the nation. Foday Sankoh made use of the magnetism of a youth performance-based occasion to appeal to Sierra Leoneans as a man

of peace. It could have been mere theatrics, but followers of that masquerade performance recalled that while handling the shotgun, he announced, 'Young people of Sierra Leone, we are all one; the fighting is over'. The onlookers and the followers of the masquerade performance shouted and clapped, in anticipation of the prolonged war's end.

Sankoh had sensed the ethnic diversity and size of the masquerade's following and attempted to rally the nation – from the grassroots up – to the peaceful intentions he advertised on that platform. The drama could not have been lost on some Sierra Leoneans. The day of the masquerade's performance, 27 April 2000, was the country's Independence Day, a national holiday. The then president of Sierra Leone, Alhaji Ahmad Tejan-Kabbah, had made his Independence Day speech on national radio that morning, assuring all that he was working towards the consolidation of peace. His was a call to the official nation; Sankoh's was an attempt to speak to the nation from below with a multiform Odelay licence. But after the 'devil dance' later that evening, the ECOWAS and Sierra Leone Army soldiers returned to their battalions, regiments and companies; and some rebel fighters who had come to town for the masquerade's performance returned to their temporarily abandoned bastions. The war was back on. Brothers and sisters in performance once more became adversaries on the bigger national stage. When the civil war officially ended in 2002, many Nigerian Yoruba soldiers reportedly danced a farewell 'devil dance' before departing for the Nigerian homeland. Some still support the Nigerian/Yoruba secret society diaspora in Sierra Leone.

Conclusions

Odelay secret societies serve as interethnic, transethnic and transnational links as well as encapsulations of perceived enemies. These organizations' relevance traverses Sierra Leone's history – from slavery and the slave trade to the prewar era, war years and postwar period.

Memberships of and across Yoruba-modelled secret societies and the excavation of the Nigerian connection in an urban field of ways and means have become roots and routes to the Freetown cityscape and Sierra Leone, at large. Because the official nation is a weak and ineffective enfolding, a large group of the socioeconomically disadvantaged has been situationally fused in a community of shared lived experiences and circumstances that substitutes the official nation in everyday interactions and calculations. That community has history as a key dimension, making it possible for Freetown's new secret societies to cultivate, tap and uncover their Nigerian Yoruba origins.

Odelays and allied secret societies are living transnational, transethnic and, increasingly, trans-status transactional organisms with roots, trunks, shoots and branches – all nurtured by water from (trans)Atlantic history and the fertilizer of current circumstances.

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Notes

1. These are different from Brazilian masquerades, which tend to be related to carnival. Unfortunately, the secret society members who provided the bulk of the information I discuss and analyse here did not permit me to take or reproduce pictures of their masquerades.
2. On 'we' and 'they' groupness, see Elwert (1997).
3. 'Devil' here refers to a secret society's masquerades. Nunley (1987: xv), writing about the aesthetics of Odelays, points out that the 'devil' characterization goes back to early missionary activities in Sierra Leone. Christian missionaries wanted to present masquerades to new converts as symbols of Satan, the antithesis of the Almighty God. This was meant to discourage them from becoming members of sodalities that had/have masquerades as one of their manifestations. Secret societies use(d) this negative appellation to their advantage to generate fear among nonmembers. The term 'devil' is now also used to mean the secret societies themselves.
4. Like other secret sodalities, Freetown's secret societies, including Odelays, privilege their secrets. I noticed this in the organized isolation of one elderly member of an Odelay organization who was deemed to have been too cooperative with a foreign researcher. The man informed me that his status in the society had been significantly reduced because he had given information and pictures to the researcher, who went on to publish a book containing the disclosed information and images. Other older members, he said, had accused him of speaking and showing too much, especially to a white man: 'They said that I had brought the inside to the outside; but I know I did not say or give anything to the researcher which would have made our society less-respected or less-feared. God forbid', he concluded. Yet his relative isolation, based on that perceived indiscretion from about thirty years ago, persists unto the present.
5. Those preclusions, this study found, were the primary reason for the formation of Odelays, though it is popularly thought instead to be that some disrespectful young people in Freetown felt a need to challenge older secret societies' status quo.
6. Ottenheimer (2012: 317) defines diglossia as occurring 'when the varieties of language that coexist are different versions of the same language than different languages … [and] a situation in which two or more varieties of the same language [are used] by speakers in

different kinds of settings … for differential access to power and prestige, or intimacy and authenticity'.

7. See Goffman (1994 [1959]: 107–14).

8. My informants, some of whom were not members of Lord a Mercy, supplied the dates 1950, around 1951 and 1952. There did not seem to be a record of Lord a Mercy coming into being. This is probably the reason it is not considered the first Odelay. Paddle Odelay's members contend that Paddle was the first. Some of Paddle's older members describe Paddle as the first approved and registered Odelay. Many older non-Lord a Mercy interviewees argued that Lord a Mercy was a mere imitation, an unruly challenge to the secret society status quo.

9. One of my insider informants said Boxing Day; two others said Easter Monday.

10. Faulks observes that 'poverty, discrimination and exclusion can all undermine the benefits of citizenship. Thus a consideration of citizenship must also involve an examination of the conditions that make it meaningful' (Faulks 2000: 3).

11. Recently, the trend has been that Creoles feature prominently in the executives.

12. From interviews carried out from 16 December 2008 to 8 February 2009.

13. The use of 'brother' here is metaphorical.

14. A *bila* is a hunting gun, symbolically used by its carrier to shepherd the masquerade and its followers during public performances. Informants told me that *bila* was a Yoruba argot word for the imperative 'go away' (by implication driving enemies away from the masquerade) or the verb 'to shepherd'. In an exemplification of what Højbjerg (2005: 148) calls 'the political use of symbolism', politicians believe that carrying the *bila* gun is equal to marshalling and controlling the support of participants in masquerades' public performances, and is hence a prized political statement. People already in politics and those intending to go into it thus clamour to wield it.

15. I distinguish between youth in age terms and socioeconomic youth in King (2007) and King (2012).

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Part II

Diasporic Entanglements

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Chapter 4

Contested Transnational Spaces

Debating Emigrants' Citizenship and Role in Guinean Politics

Anita Schroven

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Introduction

> They have no idea what they are talking about – they have no right to speak to us like that. They are not Guineans! (Forécariah, February 2007)

Such comments were commonly heard in Guinea during February 2007, when a wave of national strikes brought the country to a standstill and, once again, to the verge of a national crisis. 'They' referred to Guineans living abroad and voicing their opinions over the radio concerning recent events in their country of origin. In Forécariah, a small town in coastal Guinea, 'they' were usually referred to as *ressortissants Guinéens* – Guineans living abroad. The word *ressortissant* indicates someone who has left his or her place of origin to make a living in the capital city or elsewhere, and in this specific context, someone who went abroad. 'Us', on the other hand, were the local listeners, people assembled around a radio at home or in a street-side cafe – and implicitly all Guineans in a country that had experienced increasing economic hardship and political turmoil throughout the last decade.

The debates over the rights and duties of Guineans living abroad took place against a background of mounting political tension between Guinea's government and trade unions. The unions were protesting against declining living conditions due to failing economic policies and gross economic mismanagement of the country's abundant resources. From 2006 to early 2007, these economically motivated demonstrations evolved into demands for a personnel change in government and profound reforms of economic and political policy.[1] In a context of heated local debates about the national strikes and rising tensions countrywide, a growing perception of a dichotomy between the local population and Guineans living abroad could clearly be detected. The people discussing such matters even accepted and promoted the idea of denying 'them' Guinean citizenship.

What were the motivations and implications of this demand? What were the commentators truly saying when they asserted that Guineans abroad did not possess the right to express opinions on the political situation of their home country? These leading questions guide this chapter's investigation into the transnational public space that Guineans have created between their country of origin and new places of settlement. While the contested domain in this example is the right and duty of political participation, it is also an integral part of the larger transnational space created by migrants from and local communities within Guinea. Therefore, the political debates on the participation of *ressortissants* and their particular responsibilities are based on the general negotiations concerning the actual and desired relations between the local population and those living abroad.

After briefly considering the Guinean transnational community's establishment and its increased possibilities for participation in the political life of its country of origin, I will examine how one particular community in that home country reacted to such outside participation. Most studies of transnational communities focus on the political activities of emigrants, but here I am interested in how those 'at home' debated issues related to the political opinions and demands of migrants abroad. I present three different phases of this debate that spanned several months and focused on various aspects of political engagement: (1) notions of the *ressortissants* as the Guinean people's ambassadors to the international community; (2) the question of whether being absent from the country constitutes a negation of the *ressortissants*' Guinean nationality; and (3) the perception that those who live abroad dominate national politics to the detriment of those living in Guinea. Though I separate these three phases for the purposes of analysis, they are in fact highly interdependent. Taken together, they reveal the ambiguous stance that Guineans living at home take towards the Guinean transnational community in general and towards their rights and duties as political actors, and hence as citizens, in particular.

A Transnational Community's Political Participation: Considerations for Guinea

The term 'transnational community' has gained prominence in the social sciences since advances in the globalization of technology, mobility, migration and political discourse have established an ever evolving web of connections transcending the borders and boundaries of the nation state. In the analysis, some have been identified as diasporas – collectives of people residing outside of their country of origin due to forced migration, establishing new lives in new places but using the country of origin as the main reference for their individual and collective identities. Such foundations may lead to a permanent politicization of the collective identity into a diaspora.

Aihwa Ong (2003) and Rogers Brubaker (2005) warn against the analytical conflation of 'transnational communities' and 'diaspora' that is largely due to the expanding use of the latter term. 'Diaspora' is used to designate a politically motivated community in exile, whereas 'transnational' denotes communities that originate from increased mobility and migration more extensive than an expulsion of one particular group. I support Ong's contention that these diverse transnational communities should not be identified collectively as politically motivated and also, implicitly, as dissidents opposed to the government of their country of origin.

Processes termed 'transnational' are not new today, nor were they new when countries such as Guinea became independent. Many authors argue that the intensity of the migratory, social, economic and political processes occurring across and beyond national spaces should be distinguished from previous processes of migration (see Appadurai 1991; Smith and Guarnizo 1998; Faist 2000). In recent years, these heterogeneous groups, subsumed under the collective term 'transnational communities', have come under scientific scrutiny with regard to their economic ties to their places of origin, for example in national or hometown (development) associations. That research has laid the groundwork for the consideration of their political (and advocacy) engagement in both the hosting societies and the countries of origin (M. Smith 1994; Portes 1996; Smith and Guarnizo 1998; Itzigsohn 2000; Bauböck 2003). Transnational communities' conflict-fuelling or peace-building activities and influences in countries suffering war and civil strife have been studied (Sheffer 2003; Prikkalainen and Abdile 2009; Hoehne et al. 2010; Schlee and Schlee 2012). Such examples highlight collective activities by otherwise potentially unconnected people, all engaged in creating a transnational political space that links communities abroad with their home country. Just as hometown associations are established in communities abroad, so too are chapters of political parties, with party politics and election campaigns taking place in several countries at once. In response, the 'sending countries' attempt to influence their emigrants living permanently abroad by extending citizenship, electoral and other sociopolitical benefits to them (see Wang 1993; R. Smith 2003;). Itzigsohn (2000: 1127) claims that this highly institutionalized political space where migrants engage is what shapes the present-day era of migration as a whole.

This proclaimed new era of transnational migration does not mean that political engagement beyond the borders of a given country is a recent phenomenon. The colonial period established important institutional ties in this context. In the Guinean colony, direct political representation in the French parliament began with the Fourth Republic, whose constitution had been drafted in collaboration with political leaders in France's West African colonies between 1944 (the Brazzaville Declaration) and 1946, when the constitution went into effect. At the same time, the colony also established territorial councils, to which some

members were appointed by the governor and others elected by select groups of colonial subjects (Chafer 2002: 55ff.).[2] Although political participation during the end of the colonial period may have been reserved for the elites and taken place only in colonial centres or in Paris, these efforts were closely observed and discussed among the broader population (cf. Schmidt 2005).

Colonies, the *métropole* and regional institutions such as the Afrique Occidentale Française (AOF) struggled to deal with the mobility of politicians and the electorate, elections being the only form of political participation that was possible until political parties were founded starting in 1948. Some members of parliament or the territorial council represented a constituency from which they did not originate. Questions about whether voters who were eligible to vote within Guinea could participate in elections while residing in other colonies – and whether they would vote for their Guinean council member or that of their colony of current residence – cannot be easily answered, given the many transformations of the AOF after World War II. Additionally, with respect to the mobility of people in administration and politics at the time, Charles concludes that by 1954, just four years before the country's independence, Guinean colonial politics had been delocalized and 'gravitated' around the centres of Conakry, Dakar and Paris (Charles 1997: 103–104).

The movement of Guinean politicians, traders and other professionals within West Africa and beyond did not stop with independence. In fact, during the so-called First Republic (1958–84) Guinea experienced several waves of emigration caused by the lack of economic prospects and political suppression that sometimes assumed an ethnic character, particularly targeting members of the demographically largest ethnic group, the FulBe, called Peul in Guinea.[3] From this period a network of Guineans emerged across West Africa and beyond, held together by shared experiences and sometimes engaging in oppositional politics, such as founding political parties – a forbidden activity in Guinea at that time. The government publicly shunned emigrants and officially limited their rights to political participation. Extended family networks were maintained, however, enabling Guineans at home to profit from the earnings of those living abroad. Kaba (1977: 40) suggests that in the 1970s, basic medical services that typically were available only abroad were domestically affordable only to those Guineans who had financial connections to migrant family members. Thus, economic ties and political engagement between home and abroad are by no means a new phenomenon. However, new technologies of travel and communication have considerably intensified and strengthened the ties between Guineans living in the country and the *ressortissants.*

The *ressortissants Guinéens* are a very heterogeneous group. Some of them have their roots in political exile: they or their parents were forced to leave the country due following political prosecution during the First Republic under Guinea's first post-independence government. In later years, during the Second

Republic (1984–2008), economic (and educational) reasons seem to have been what motivated many Guineans to move abroad even as some of the earlier exiles were returning. Most recently, economic hardship and the search for greater sociopolitical stability have pushed many to emigrate. These are people from heterogeneous backgrounds, with or without formal education, substantial capital or international (family) connections.[4] Taken together, Guineans abroad do not represent a coherent group from any perspective. Some stay in touch with their family and friends in Guinea and can afford to provide a certain level of economic support. Some take an active interest in politics and even become engaged in political parties that have functioning chapters abroad. Though the latter are certainly not the largest group of Guineans abroad, their activities become highly visible in various media outlets, as will be discussed here.

Many studies of migrants establishing transnational communities foreground the intricate role these communities can play in local, regional or international politics, usually framing migrants' ties to their countries of origin in a political context in the form of motivation for migration, questions of legal status in the host country and so on. These migrants can become further politicized in times of crisis and prompt a new engagement with the country as a whole, the national government or other migrants of the same origin. Opposition to politics in the home country may prompt such revived political engagement. Indeed, oppressive practices of governance can create an atmosphere that allows dissenting parties to thrive abroad, as members of the transnational community fundraise and organize public events to initiate political communication with counterparts in the sending country. Levitt and Glick Schiller (2004: 1026) argue that it is migrants' experiences with multiple legal and political cultures that frame their points of reference and result in demands for political or legal changes in their countries of origin, thus giving the impression that their engagement is usually critical of, if not overtly oppositional to, the government in place.

Studies by Guarnizo, Portes and Haller (2003), Ong (1996) and M. Smith (1994) indicate that migrants' political engagement, whether directed at host governments or at their countries of origin, is very heterogeneous and not necessarily counterhegemonic or oppositional. Strong supporters of the home government can be found among politically active segments of the transnational community. In 2006/07, both the major opposition parties of Guinea and the then ruling Parti de l'Unité et du Progrès had party chapters in cities abroad that hosted large groups of Guinean *ressortissants*. Because of their great diversity, their political engagements require context-specific examination. The discussion of such political engagements presupposes that these activities are recognized by the government and the local populations, and appreciated or contested from a position of political (party) convictions.

In Guinea, popular knowledge has it that about one third of the country's population emigrated during the First Republic. After the death of Sékou Touré

in 1984, the new government under President Lansana Conté – realizing the potential that lay in the migrant community – urged Guineans to return and help rebuild the country (Bah, Keita and Lootvoet 1989). While it is unclear how many Guineans emigrated where, or when they returned, the successive governments in Conakry were and are interested in integrating them into 'national development efforts'. The constitution of 1992, which is still in effect, stipulates that Guinean nationals living abroad have the right to participate in national elections and should be represented in parliament. However, it offers no specifications on how this direct representation should take place. The future constitution, in preparation since 2010, intends to clarify this issue, potentially granting the transnational community a fixed number of parliamentary seats by direct vote.

In this specific context it becomes evident that domestic sociopolitical conditions affect how governments deal with members of 'their' transnational community. Although parliamentary representation could be ensured in several ways, the direct election of a fixed number of candidates by all Guineans living abroad could lead to fears that certain particularly politically active subgroups of the transnational community have inadvertently been granted preference. The comparatively high number of ethnic Peul in Guinea's transnational community is an implicit argument against such reserved seats in parliament. Some members of this group recall experiences of political exile resulting from prosecution from the First Republic onwards. This group is well organized, compared to other associations (ethnic and non-ethnic) of Guineans abroad. Its mobilization with regard to political parties and fundraising is also comparatively strong.[5] Thus, a direct voting procedure for reserved parliamentary seats could give additional weight to those political parties that draw on ethnic (i.e. Peul) electoral support. This issue touches on popular fears in Guinea that the Peul could gain political power, something populist voices abusing ethnic stereotypes raise as a threat to all other ethnic groups in Guinea. The conflicts surrounding elections from the 1990s up to the latest parliamentary elections in 2013 reveal both the devastating consequences that can result from ethnicization of politics, and the way these tensions are quickly mirrored in Guinea's transnational community. Members of this community have in fact expressed doubts that direct representation could be enacted.

The political considerations concerning the electoral rights of the Guinean transnational community do not end with negotiations between that community and the 'home' government, for the local population is involved in the discussion as well. Studies on transnational communities do not often address whether local people accept emigrants as relevant partners in political discourse and then grant the necessary space for them to voice their opinions. Gerharz (2010: 161–62) points out that negotiations between groups of 'migrants' and 'locals' are essential to both parties because they redraw the boundaries between local and transnational spaces, similar to the way identities are mutually negotiated in these

encounters. Power relations between the groups remain complicated. Due to the resourcefulness of some members of the transnational communities, their engagement in the evolving relations within the transnational community may appear to dominate the expression of a country's public life or a particular political debate – the 'transnational public space'. In some cases, this space itself becomes the object of contestation between transnational and local groups negotiating politics (Itzigsohn and Saucedo 2002: 769).

This essay examines the negotiations of transnational public space using the example of Guineans debating political rights and duties of the *resortissants.* The debate focused on whether migrants did indeed deserve the political space they were demanding for themselves, and whether they were entitled to voice a political opinion when only the local population experienced the oppression by the government – in other words, whether emigrants possessed the necessary political citizenship to have a say.

Guinean Politics Debated Between Local and Transnational Communities

In the highly fluid political situation of Guinea in 2006 and 2007, strikes against the national government occurred repeatedly. Popular call-in shows on international radio stations such as RFI (Radio France International) and the BBC (British Broadcasting Corporation) drew wide attention. Internet access was largely confined to the largest cities, so radio was sometimes the only source of information, particularly in rural areas – especially after the government inhibited the dispensation of mobile phone top-up cards and later disabled text messaging as well.[6] Fuel shortages kept the generators that supplied electricity to mobile phone antennas from being recharged, further limiting the already patchy mobile phone coverage in rural Guinea. The few private radio stations were forced to close down or limit their operations, while the public radio station RTG (Radio Télévision Guinéen) broadcast traditional music and heavily censored news. In this situation, international radio stations were instrumental, granting airtime for news on current events and allowing callers to debate the way out of the political deadlock. Many of the contributors identified themselves as Guineans calling from West African capitals, Europe or North America. They often called upon the local population to act: to strike longer and more efficiently, and to make certain demands of the government, labour unions and other national leaders.

In the local arena of Forécariah, much debate surrounded the personal background, Guinean town of origin, and family ties of these callers. Ethnicity played a part, but the speculation revolved primarily around extended family ties. 'Don't you have a cousin who is in [name of city]?' was an oft-heard remark after the popular RFI discussion programme *Appel sur l'actualité.* As many first and family names closely resemble one another, this question was quite common; one invari-

ably knew that one's interlocutor indeed had a relative of that name somewhere abroad. While the tone may have sounded accusatory, the enquiry was chiefly intended to validate an unknown caller's identity as a fellow Guinean before assessing the significance of the opinion voiced.

In this Guinean debate, the political figure of the 'stranger' is closely inter-linked with the attempt to familiarize this figure and integrate him or her into personalized networks. In different periods of the country's past, foreigners were stylized as potential threats to the country who sought to disrupt the population's unity in order to weaken the country and make it more vulnerable to outside in-tervention. This public attitude may have begun before 1958, when the colonial administration tried to manipulate elections to limit the independence drive, or with independence, when the departing French colonial administration was accused of destroying infrastructure with the intention of hampering the new country's evolution (Rivière 1977; Diallo 1990; Straker 2007). Former Presi-dents Sékou Touré and Lansana Conté both utilized this image of the suspicious foreigner in contexts of regional instability to impress upon the population the necessity to stand united as Guineans. In early 2007, rumours spread that Libe-rian ex-rebels had reached the capital along with mercenaries from neighbouring Guinea-Bissau. These well-known spectres of the invading stranger built upon actual past threats and sought to connect them to the present (Kaba 1978; Ko-bélé Kéita 2002; McGovern 2002; Arieff and McGovern 2013). Beyond a call for national unity, identifying a foreign scapegoat implied that the current threat was not made by the ideal Guinean citizens, who were implicitly peaceful, law-abiding people faithfully supporting their government in trying times.

In the generally tense political atmosphere of late 2006 and early 2007, it was therefore important to establish that the speaker was not in fact a stranger aiming to sow dissension but rather a Guinean voicing a genuinely felt opinion. The idea of a distant cousin being potentially able to verify the identity of the caller from outside the country was a common and reassuring rhetorical move – and a typical practice with regard to newcomers from anywhere within Guinea as well. Once this symbolic familiarity had been established, the opinion voiced by the caller could be heard as valid – in the sense of 'He has the right to say that'[7] – even if the local discussants did not agree with the opinion and perhaps suspected that the caller had a specific political party affiliation or personal tie to a well-known political figure. Whatever the case, the callers' demands for space in the tense political arena of Guinea were granted, at first.

Referring to other people's political views rather than expressing controversial opinions oneself, breaking with the usual public 'culture of silence and guarded-ness' (Dave 2014: 2), could also represent a rhetorical move for self-preservation. In Guinea's not-so-distant past, particularly during the First Republic, express-ing controversial political opinions could be dangerous in certain circumstances. People remember it as a time when

one could not talk. Everyone could be a spy, your neighbour, even your family could report you had said something against the government, then you were in real trouble. Even your life could be in danger. Here in Forécariah everyone has family members who disappeared during that time. (Forécariah, November 2006)

With this historical experience in mind, it is understandable that people preferred to discuss politics using other people's words, quoting radio comments to voice opinions and to participate in discussions. This strategy served as protection: should government agents enquire later, no one could be pressed to own up to a particular opinion.

Demand for Transnational Action

The perception of opinions coming from abroad, propagated by way of the media, changed over time in Forécariah. With the concurrent breakdown of political negotiations in the capital and rising cost of food staples, local commentators' attitudes towards members of the Guinean transnational community changed, affecting the communication space that they shared. To understand the circumstances that led to this change, it is necessary to consider what was happening in Guinea. The military had cracked down on protesting trade unions and other critical voices that had united under a loose civil society umbrella, often referred to in Guinea as *forces vives,* in June and December 2006. The negotiations – that is, the limited negotiations that had been allowed at all – had not effectively improved living conditions, curbed the climbing inflation or halted the high-level embezzlement of the country's resources by the president's entourage.[8] Demonstrations and negotiations had failed to yield results. Thus, local commentators called upon the Guinean transnational community[9] to function as ambassadors for the local population and organize protest marches to impress upon powerful actors, such as the United Nations and the governments of the United States and France, the extent of political repression and economic suffering in their home country.

The news of the demonstrations that resulted in front of key embassies in Washington, Brussels and Paris was well received in Forécariah, despite the challenges to gaining access to news at all. Private Guinean Internet sites documented images and speeches from the protest marches, and when private radio was reinstated some of these reports were read out – again, closely listened to and accompanied by speculations as to who might have been there and what kinds of details this friend or that relative could have reported had there been a mobile phone connection at the given time. These websites preserved the 'transnational public' that had been created for later perusal and reflection by people who did not have access to the information during the period of strikes.[10]

In such a situation, the politically active Guinean communities abroad came to be perceived as the acting arm of a people whose majority could not engage in protests themselves. Locally, this was sometimes framed as 'the *ressortissants*' duty':

> They have to help us, they owe us that much. We look after their proper-
> ties here, after their old parents. We welcome them and host them when
> they come to visit. Now it is their task *as Guineans* to help us! (Foré-
> cariah, January 2007)[11]

Comments such as this were based on the argument of shared citizenship. At certain moments transnational and local populations shared tasks, such as build-ing of houses and then keeping them up, caring for older family members, per-forming rituals and holding religious festivals, and financing school or medical bills. In this way they remained closely bound as members of the same extended community. In other words, this sharing of tasks and benefits may initially have been based on family ties, but it effectively became a community occupation, particularly on the local side.

The above quote frames the sharing of tasks within the context of shared citizenship: all of the addressed are being united by the fact that they are Guin-ean citizens engaged in the political evolution of the country. Belonging to this community of people was automatically associated with shared obligations. Peo-ple within the country were looking for a way to connect to the outside as the domestic situation grew desperate; hence, outside support was sought. Whereas the optimal projected result of the emigrants' demonstrations was action taken by foreign governments that would directly intervene on behalf of the powerless population in Guinea itself, in the meantime the transnational community was an audience that listened and commiserated, providing at least a sense of relief and security. Such an attentive audience outside of Guinea also meant that the government and security forces could not pursue a policy of violence with impu-nity but would have to answer at some point. Such ideas and reassurances became a kind of solace in Forécariah. The transnational community, conceptualized as a homogenous whole by the local audience, was unable to share the experience of those in Forécariah directly yet remained an integral part of the process, and the resultant bond was not a matter of belonging to a particular extended family or ethnic group but rather that they were all Guineans.

Denying Political Space

The situation changed no less than a few weeks later. In February 2007 the mili-tary had violently squashed more demonstrations in the larger cities, and as nego-tiations for a change of government were haltingly under way in Conakry, callers

from abroad received a cooler welcome. Even when callers' Guinean descent or nationality was not necessarily doubted, their entitlement to (publicly) voice an opinion was questioned. The callers often urged the local population to present demands to the political leaders so as to 'improve negotiations' regarding governmental changes and achieve a 'true democratic turn' in the country. One of their main arguments is summarized in this message from a U.S.-based caller to RFI:

> It is now that pressure must be applied, it is now that people have to risk everything and maybe even strike again and lose their lives – otherwise our children will not live in a better country.

This and similar opinions voiced by Guineans calling from abroad stirred many responses among the population of Forécariah. While the possibility hung in the air that the current negotiations would fail, just as they had in 2006, and with new rounds of demonstrations being cautiously considered locally, hearing such demands from abroad aroused loud and emotional reactions. Replies came in many forms:

> Let him speak, he is far away [in Philadelphia], he does not matter! (Forécariah, February 2007)

> It is not him who will be shot; it is not his children who have died in January [2007]. He has no idea what he is talking about! (Ibid.)

> Our children? His children are safe, well-fed, healthy, going to good schools, they have a future. They have nothing in common with our children here who are dying every day of diarrhoea or malaria. We are not the same; he has no right to make demands like that! (Ibid.)

Through such reactions, local discussants negated the political space that callers had demanded for themselves. Their entitlement to contribute to the debate of the future Guinea was revoked on the grounds that they did not share the same everyday concerns of the local population.

The shared experience of (personal and collective) suffering constitutes an important part of the Guinean national consciousness (Kohl and Schroven 2014). It draws on memories of the colonial experience, strongly influenced by the redefinition of that period as promoted by the anti-imperial ideology of the First Republic. Today, the period of the First Republic itself has been redefined as a period of suffering under an authoritarian regime and failing economic system. Yet this period is not simply dismissed summarily due to the negative experiences; rather, it is also lauded as one that lastingly shaped the people in Guinea into a nation and made them modern citizens. According to popular observations, the

Guinean level of national identification surpasses that of neighbouring countries, where ethnicity remains more important in everyday life than national belonging (Rivière 1977, 1978; Straker 2008). Even against the background of an acknowledged difficult past, Guineans take great pride in this pervasive national awareness and present it as one reason why the country has not experienced civil war, though many of its neighbours have.[12] Today, the shared experience of suffering under a (distant centralized) government – in both the past and present – forms a key part of being Guinean and therefore excludes those migrants who do not share this experience in their current lives.

Contesting the Political Rights of Guineans Abroad

The local population's increasing reluctance to liberally grant political space to the *ressortissants* became even more pronounced in mid 2007 when the political parties resumed activities, prompted by the successive installation of new prime ministers and promised preparations for long-overdue parliamentary elections. Many parties held meetings for members and even political rallies, asserting their intentions for the upcoming elections. These activities took place outside of Guinea. Many local commentators criticized the party leaders for paying more attention to the electorate abroad than to the 'real Guineans' who lived in the country:

> It's the money, they [opposition party leaders] know that they get their money from the *ressortissants,* so they are going shopping [*fait la course,* collecting campaign contributions] now, even before the real election-run begins. (Forécariah, July 2007)

Other local commentators were more pointedly critical of the fact that many party leaders and politicians had spent considerable time abroad, either in actual political exile or as a cautious move in light of the unpredictability of the government:

> It's the same all over again. When in 1993 [legislative] elections were coming, politicians turned up from all over Europe, from the U.S. They never even lived here for decades. They had no idea what life was about here. … They stirred up things, and when at the demonstrations people were shot, they were far away … running to the airport and off to their big villas in Europe. (Ibid.)

Another chimed in:

> Let them just do their thing now in Conakry. This politics business is for rich people from abroad, it serves the interests of the people abroad, not of real Guineans. (Ibid.)

Whereas people in Forécariah often construed national politics as a distant affair for 'politicians' in the capital (Schroven 2010: 137 ff.), in this case it was depicted as the provenance of the Guineans living abroad. Many opposition leaders were closely associated or even equated with the *ressortissants*, as they and their immediate family spent significant parts of their lives abroad, accumulating considerable wealth and fitting the general image of successful migrants. They were portrayed as visiting home occasionally, demonstrating their success abroad with conspicuous displays of wealth in the face of a poor population and demanding gratitude or allegiance in return for small gifts, without much consideration of the lives the local people were leading. 'They lack respect for the family! As Guineans they should know better', was an often-heard summary of the behaviour of such visitors.

In mid 2007, commentators in Forécariah argued that Guinea's political space, where the *ressortissants* were very much present, was a space that the common people in Guinea did not share. They conceptualized the *ressortissants* as taking part in an elite discourse of 'politicians' – a term popularly used to describe easily corruptible, politically unrooted opportunists without links to the lives of ordinary Guineans. The transnational space that had been shared by the politically active *ressortissants* and the local population at the beginning of 2007 was now separate spaces – to the perceived disadvantage of the local population. They now saw the migrants as intruders usurping a political space that seemed to have opened up briefly to participation after the national strikes and was very precious after nearly fifty years of authoritarian rule. As a consequence, the popular mood turned against the party leaders and their entourages from abroad, as well as against *ressortissants*' general claims of participating in a shared political space. Politics now happened not only far away in Conakry, but even farther away in emigration centres abroad.

In the eyes of local commentators, shared nationality – with its 'constituents' of collective ancestry and history, and the mutual feeling of belonging and striving towards a joint future – was thus not enough to link these groups of people separated by physical distance. The crucial missing ingredient was the struggles of everyday life that the *ressortissants* did not share. Full political citizenship for the *ressortissants,* in the sense of the possibility of participating in Guinean politics, was at the least questioned, if not denied, by the local commentators.

Conclusions: Who Is a Guinean Citizen?

The accusation contained in the opening quote – 'They are not Guineans!' – originates from a debate about *ressortissants*' right to participate in Guinean politics during a phase of both great hope and great insecurity concerning the country's future. It reveals a particular notion of citizenship that goes beyond the mere demand for shared origin or nationality. According to this notion, the rights to

vote for presidents or parliament and to make political demands of the Guinean people are linked to the experience of shared suffering. Thus, such rights are not simply granted by one's Guinean nationality. The lack of participation in everyday life in Guinea with all of its attendant socioeconomic hardships and political insecurity thus invalidated any claims Guinean emigrants made to legitimately enter into political debates following the 2007 strikes – at least from the perspective of the local population. While the *ressortissants* demanded space on a national level, at the local level they were deemed unqualified to participate in decision-making processes for the future because they lacked experience of everyday life. The pervasive visibility of the transnational public space, which by mid 2007 was dominated by (opposition) party politics and 'their' politicians, limited the space the local population was willing to grant the *ressortissants.* In Forécariah, the *ressortissants'* visibility suggested to the local population that they would not have political space for themselves in a future Guinea.

This stands in contrast to an earlier phase of the ongoing debate, when Guineans living abroad had been envisioned as spokespersons or ambassadors of the local population. In that inclusive phase, the idea of solidarity was invoked based on an implicit agreement to share tasks and responsibilities between the *ressortissants* and local Guineans. Exchanges between the two groups were not always harmonious, but the local population emphasized common belonging, shared interests and mutual responsibilities to justify the demands they placed on emigrants, who in turn were expected to send remittances, participate in community life even from abroad and assist in situations of need – such those resulting from suppression and violence experienced at the hands of government forces.

This particular notion of solidarity eventually gave rise to criticism of the *ressortissants,* who, it was said, had not complied with the expectations placed upon them. Furthermore, the emigrants' demands – voiced over the radio – for more demonstrations in Guinean cities, more pressure to be exerted on the government and therefore more sacrifices to be endured by the local population were met with dismay by the local audience in Forécariah. At that moment the differences between the two groups came to the fore – so much so that the local population even began to question the *ressortissants'* right to their Guinean citizenship.

The varying emphases of the above debate are part of wider negotiations about the public space that emigrants are to be granted. From a local perspective, the recognition that *ressortissants* receive from the government and political leaders is undeservedly dominant in the debate and thus needs to be challenged. More generally, however, the question arises as to how local populations perceive a politically active emigrant population and what space they wish to grant it under changing conditions within the shared home country.

Nationality and citizenship form a basic part of the local debate. Throughout the period discussed in this chapter, people in Forécariah did not necessarily specifically question the nationality of the *ressortissants,* but they did question the po-

litical space the *ressortissants* were occupying – as citizens actively engaged in the debating and decision-making of Guinean politics. From the local perspective, even though a common past and heritage amounted to a common nationality, emigrants' nonparticipation in the everyday struggles within Guinea disqualified them from political citizenship.

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Notes

1. Ethnographic fieldwork in Guinea was conducted between April 2006 and July 2007 in the context of the project 'Local Authorities and Oral History in Processes of Conflict and Integration in Guinea' at the Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, Halle (Saale). I thank the conference participants, the anonymous reviewers and the editors for their constructive engagement and valuable comments on previous drafts.
2. Initially popular suffrage was not practised, but village and canton chiefs, war veterans and high-ranking clerks were among those who formed the core group that expanded over time to include other groups of people. Only with the passage of the *Loi Cadre* of 1956 was popular suffrage (extended to all adults, regardless of status, employment or sex) formally achieved (de Benoist 1982).
3. The so-called Complot Peul with its violent aftermath in 1976 is one example of the political targeting of ethnic Peul during the First Republic (Sow 1989; Groelsema 1998). When multiparty elections first took place in the 1990s, Peul leaders demanded reparations and equal opportunities in the political and administrative arenas (Groelsema 1998).
4. Yaguine Koita and Fodé Tounkara, two Guinean youths who froze to death while travelling clandestinely on a Europe-bound plane, have become symbols for the youth, predominantly male, who try to make their fortune abroad.
5. The Guinean migration and transnational community has not yet been researched. The above considerations are based on personal communications with Guinean migrants living in Germany, Belgium and the United States.
6. In the context of limited funds and the restricted availability of top-up phone credit, (bulk) text messaging was a convenient way to share information and mobilize politically. Disabling this means of communication forced people to make phone calls, which were significantly more expensive and reached a much smaller audience. With one state-owned

phone company (SOTELGUI) and a single commercial competitor at the time, the government was able to effectively manipulate mobile phone communication and curb already fragile Internet capacities in January 2007.

7. Most commonly, both callers and commentators were male. Women discuss their political opinions, but usually in a setting more private than street-side bars or neighbourhood courtyards.

8. For more details of the events see ICG (2008) and McGovern (2007).

9. For the sake of the current argument and in order to emphasize the locally perceived differences, I follow the emic nomenclature of grouping Guineans abroad together into a single entity, the *ressortissants*.

10. Throughout January and much of February 2007 the very limited Internet infrastructure in Guinea was further curbed by the government-ordered shutdown of Internet cafés. Private or office Internet access – very limited to begin with – was blocked in February 2007, when martial law was declared for two weeks (IFEX 2007).

11. The following excerpts originate from conversations with established interlocutors and from conversations in the semipublic setting of a roadside café frequented daily by a fairly closed circle of male customers.

12. One might argue that in Mali and Senegal, long-lasting conflicts with internal rebellions and secessionist movements did not constitute civil war. However, many Guineans see these events as evidence of failed nation-building processes.

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Identity Beyond ID

Diaspora within the Nation

Markus Rudolf

'You cannot have two ID cards, you know', Daouda explains.[1] Sitting on the porch of one of the numerous mud-built tin-roofed houses on the periphery of the city of Ziguinchor, in Casamance, southern Senegal, he has come from Gambia to participate in a funeral in his native town in Bandial, an hour's drive from the regional capital. He shows his Gambian ID card. It is new and fancy, looks like a debit card, and has a built-in chip. The card states: 'Born in Serrekunda, Gambian national.' Asked whether he is a national only of Gambia – the nation in which he lives – or also of Senegal – the nation in which he was born – he replies: 'They will think you are a criminal if they catch you with two ID cards'. Confronted with the fact that nevertheless numerous people hold both nationalities, he clarifies: 'You have to keep them [the IDs] apart'. Daouda left his home village in the heart of the Casamance as a young man. Illnesses had plagued him for too long: 'You know in the village there is a lot of witchcraft', he explains, 'so I followed a friend who had been to Gambia and I stayed'. Asked how he had obtained Gambian nationality and, moreover, why his birthplace had been changed to a Gambian town, he said: 'You know that is how it is done', adding: 'But they ask you a lot of questions. They want to know everything now. A lot of questions. It is not easy'.[2]

Daouda stays overnight at his sister's place before he goes to the ceremony the next day. He explains that he almost always comes for funerals, rarely for occasions such as weddings or other life-cycle festivities. The ancestors are important, he points out. But apart from that, his life seems to be in Gambia. When visited in Gambia he seems to be well integrated there. His children do not speak French; he does not have parallel households. None of his children are sent away to attend school, work or live in Senegal. This level of integration is nevertheless not the rule in the region. Many people are frontier runners: cases abound where individuals cross borders whenever a better opportunity emerges on the other side. In this case, opportunities refer to such things as better prices for consumer goods, a more developed public infrastructure, more plentiful job opportunities and so on (cf. Højbjerg et al. 2012).[3]

Diasporas or Autochthons?

How much is the cohesion and functionality of a nation-state affected by different individual trajectories, such as Daouda's described above? In other words, regarding whether people commit themselves to one nationality rather than remain frontier runners with multiple national identities,[4] what difference do their choices make with respect to nation-building? According to Fox and Miller-Idriss (2008), the fact that people have to be made national to make the nation' has been somehow neglected. It is interesting to examine how the identification marker of nationality has come to overrule all others at the actor's level. How did this marker become so important that people have sacrificed their lives for it? And what role does the distinctive feature of European nation-building play in the making of those models? Examining the less successful examples of nation-building and describing exceptions to the rules can produce a detailed explanation of the actual set of rules. The issue of national integration is truly mirrored by alienated, exiled, discriminated groups. To ask why and how these excluded groups retain loyalties and networks beyond the prioritized national identification sheds light on the question of national integration in general.

This chapter asks whether 'diaspora'[5] can be used, beyond the classic understanding of the term, as an analytical concept to isolate transnational markers of national integration. It furthermore argues that a study of diaspora groups reveals the qualities of national identification and the distinctive features of the we-group's majority that are necessary assets to be integrated. To test this idea, this essay compares the integration of one regional group in different locations. These locations stretch from what is usually understood as a typical immigrant diaspora destination, that is, overseas somewhere, to what is considered a classical homeland – the birthplace of its natives everywhere. The case of interest is the Casamançais, those people originating from the Casamance.[6] Among other places they are found in other parts of Senegal, in Gambia and in France. The findings indicate that transcending the nation-state framework of classical diaspora studies can help to better understand characteristic features of nation-building in Senegal and elsewhere: looking at the subjects who are excluded makes clearly evident which national subjects are integrated into the nation and how.

Before using the term diaspora as a tool of analysis it helps to differentiate three contexts of meaning. First, diaspora is used to identify and describe a certain transnational group different from the current national majority within the nation-state. Second, it is used as a category of self-description and belonging that transcends time and space for certain individuals. In both of these cases diaspora ascribes special characteristics to a group. Third, there is the analytical use of the term, which differentiates it from the everyday uses above. This analytical meaning can be delineated by considering the historical origin of the term and then isolating and making explicit its constitutive features and comparing them

in various contexts to determine what makes a group a diaspora in one place and not in another. In short, this means the term can be used as an analytical category, regardless of its self-ascribed and ascribed uses in different national contexts. Consequently this essay is not about groups that are referred to generally as comprising a diaspora, but about the integration and exclusion of groups that are analytically differentiated as diasporas.

Nation-State Role Models

Could Daouda, the Bandial native introduced above, be labelled as an example of a diasporic individual? Certain typical features are evident. An international border separates Gambia from Senegal. The Senegalese living in Gambia are therefore part of an immigrant group, and the Casamançais are Senegalese citizens as well. Yet the quality of integration for Casamançais in Gambia differs from other groups of immigrants. This might seem natural in frontier areas – where, for example, immigration from Senegal to Gambia can mean going no farther than next door to stay with your neighbour, as many villages are indeed divided by the border. But also in the Gambian capital and the entire Banjul-Serrekunda region, Casamançais are mostly well integrated, or at least more integrated than other groups, and are never explicitly labelled as a diaspora. A possible explanation might be that the Casamançais are not a category involved in the struggle for primacy in Gambia. The autocratic president of Gambia is a Diola. In public discourse (manifest in everyday discrimination practice) Gambia remains a Mande country. The Diola and Mande are also autochthons in the Casamance.[7]

Other groups, such as the Wolof from Senegal and the Peul from the Fouta Djallon, are not considered autochthons.[8] Ousmane, a Peul whose father came from the Fouta Djallon on foot in colonial times, explains:

> The police control the fair-skinned ones. They just control them [and nobody else]. When a policeman asked me to step out of the bus, I told him – 'Why? Because of my skin colour? I am a Gambian like you. I was born here.' They are stupid. It is always the same.

He complains that people are discriminated against because they are considered to have come from somewhere other than the immediate vicinity of Gambia (Casamance in the south and Sine Saloum in the north). 'My brother *Yellowman,* you know him, they control him all the time. They [the Mande] think they own the country. But it was the Diola who were here first – you know.'

This differentiation between who belongs to the nation – who is indigenous and who is not – constitutes the nation. As the dividing line between nation A and nation B, its existence complicates the ability of nation A/B to exist. How to integrate people from different national backgrounds into a single society has

therefore remained a question that haunts nation-states. Public debate in the West (Washington Post 2010) centres on the question of immigrants' varying points of reference with respect to values, traditions and behaviour. There appears to be a serious effort to define a framework by which to judge whether or not immigrants comply with the ideal conception of a citizen of the given nation-state. The question of belonging is also debated in migrants' countries of origin, but from a different perspective. A country like Senegal tries to profit from its migrant communities worldwide, and politicians plead for investment by the international diaspora (africa-eu-partnership 2010; Fleury 2012; Red Mangrove Development Advisors 2012).

This last example illustrates two points that commonly arise in the debate concerning integration. First, the administrative answer to the question of belonging in general is often influenced by economic considerations. Second, the question of whether a diaspora is ignored or courted, and whether migrants are integrated or rejected, is answered from within the prevailing logic of the nation-state. Such a perspective becomes clearly problematic when diaspora communities produce claims to a homeland that is not included in the landscape of modern nation-states.[9] After all, diasporas are transnational. Therefore it seems worthwhile to reflect on their role in nation-building. During the last decades the goal for studies of nation-building has been to explain how this construct – the nation-state – has become the supreme form of political organization worldwide.[10] It is also interesting to analyse how this social construction became the most important manner of identification for individuals as well.

Transformation of the Term Diaspora

For the purposes of this essay 'Diaspora' is analysed as a counterexample, and thus the term must first be clearly defined. Diaspora studies show that the African and Jewish Diasporas are paradigmatic in both popular and scientific discourse (Cohen 2008; Fox and Miller-Idriss 2008). Historically the Jewish Diaspora essentially created the term. It stems from the scattering of the Jews by the Babylonians (sixth century BC) and the Romans (AD 70).[11] It also has been used to describe the consequences of the later transatlantic slave trade (fifteenth to nineteenth centuries). Today it can be argued that it has become an undifferentiated word of identification with various meanings for different circumstances. Nevertheless, the classical definition of Diaspora goes back to the Greek term meaning 'dispersion'. And because it is historically defined first and foremost by Jewish history, the meaning goes beyond a mere synonym for dispersion. The features that are most important to keep in mind for a working definition are the following: The historic case is characterized by a *homeland,* which defines a common point of reference for people *scattered by force,* who in consequence migrate, hold a *minority* status abroad, and establish a *transnational community* that persists over

time and space.[12] Today the term diaspora is ever expanding – Chinese, Lebanese and Armenian diasporas are joined by countless others. One might come to the conclusion that the meaning of the term itself has become so 'dispersed' that its actual analytical value is doubtful (Brubaker 2005). But to keep matters simple, here the analysis of diaspora groups is used only to make possible a broad comparison of the mechanism of inclusion and exclusion. The concept is employed to assess the modes of belonging of group members from both the majority and the minority. This chapter therefore proposes to look at diaspora on different levels. The concept shall be applied to a well-known international case as well as to examples within a nation in order to approach the concept of everyday nationalism and the prioritization of identifications from different perspectives.

To start with an example of a classical migration group overseas: Senegalese are well known for their workforce diaspora. Senegalese people will tell you that a young man generally is expected to seek out his fortune abroad.[13] There are Senegalese communities in Gabon and other oil-producing countries of Africa and the Middle East, but the destination of choice is Europe – particularly France – and French-speaking Canada.[14] It is most of all the French diaspora that is ever present in Senegalese media, politics and family networks: it would be hard to find any (extended) Senegalese family without relatives in France. But while in Senegal ethnic differentiation stratifies society and overrules national identification, Senegalese abroad reach a common national identification that overrides such differences. According to the label attached to them by outsiders who are unaware of any regional differentiation, the Senegalese diaspora to a certain degree is labelled, and perceives itself, as a homogeneous group.[15] As a member of the diaspora in Paris stated: Once Senegalese arrive in France they become the same. He also said that no other sub-Senegalese community – such as a Casamançais or any other regional diaspora – was visible and recognizable in France.

Shifting of Boundaries

In different circumstances markers of distinctions might differ. The same person identified as a Senegalese in France may have a last name that is rather uncommon in his region of origin, the Casamance.[16] One such person explained how he had to convince people that he truly was a native to the region when he was still living there.

> Les gens ont dit que je suis Nordiste. On connaît que ça [the last names common in the region]. Je disais – Tu es malade, je suis d'ici, grandi ici. Il fallait que je m'explique. … [Abbé] Diamacoune a raconté d'un grand guerrier au temps [who was from the Casamance and bore the same last name].[17]

In other words, he had to defend his status as an autochthon by pointing out his and his family's origin, stretching the latter back in time and supporting his story with an account of the political leader (Abbé Diamacoune) of the secession movement. The discrepancy between how an individual's markers become relevant for his social placement in his region of origin and how they are relevant in his exile in the diaspora seems odd at first. But the mechanisms underlying this discrepancy will crystallize more clearly when the comparison is expanded. Specifically, the international (France) / regional (Casamance) case will be contrasted with the transnational (Gambia) / national (Dakar/Ziguinchor) cases.

First, though, it is necessary to explain the label *Nordiste,* mentioned above. A divide exists between people from Senegal's north and south (namely the Casamance). There are many other points of rupture within Senegal, but this north/south division has been the source of a low-grade civil war since 1982.[18] A secession movement in the Casamance has violently challenged the nation-building project of Senegal. In consequence the Casamançais are stereotyped as conspiratorial rebels and regarded as outsiders from and within Senegal. For this reason, the Casamançais are an apt group through which to determine whether the analytical tool at issue in this chapter can be applied, and whether our understanding benefits by analysing the Casamançais as a diaspora. Applying the concept allows elaboration on certain peculiarities of the Casamance conflict: for example, that the Diola are said to be both the fiercest supporters of secession (for an overview of the debate see Barbier-Wiesser 1994) and one of the best integrated groups in Senegal (Foucher 2002) appears contradictory. However, this contradiction can be resolved by placing a spotlight on groups that are not integrated and using the concept of diaspora. Such an approach reveals how individuals' belonging to a regional (Casamançais) or national (Senegalese) project is related to the conflict. It is indeed a dialectical relation: the former are shaped and reified by the latter and vice versa: 'Les nordistes, ce sont des racistes. Ce n'est pas comment chez nous', was the experience of Diatta, a Casamançais in northern Senegal. 'Ils te disent rebelle. Tous les Casaçais pour eux sont des rebelles. On te insulte. Ils ne connaissent pas Cabrousse – ou est-il. Le conflit ce sont les nordistes. … Ils dirigent tout. On ne peut rien faire.' When questioned about how he is identified and labelled as a Casamançais, Diatta said: 'Moi, je parle mieux Wolof qu'eux. Mais quand ils entendent [que tu parle] Diola…' here he paused, then summarized: '… c'est mieux chez moi'.[19] After years of working in the north, Diatta finally returned to his hometown for economic reasons and apparently also because he had been unable to integrate on a personal level in the north.[20]

Diaspora within the Nation

Is the case of the Diola above a singular case, or is it representative of a common pattern? To answer this question we asked Casamançais in Dakar (N = 133)

whether they socialize mostly with other Casamançais, and how they appraise the relations between northerners and Casamançais. We were interested in the length of time the interviewees had been in Dakar and the level of integration they experienced in their jobs, religious practices and daily lives, always keeping in mind that there are no apartheid-like ghettoes in Dakar that separate the different ethnic groups.

The relative unanimity of opinions was extraordinary.[21] The interviewees pointed out that most of the non-Casamançais in Dakar stereotyped the Casamançais as rebels. Therefore the Casamançais kept mostly to themselves, confining interactions with northerners to professional life. On the one hand, the Casamançais appear well integrated into modern Senegalese society. In general they have been integrated into certain professions (housework, security, military) more successfully than most other groups (see Foucher 2002), as is especially visible in Dakar.[22] On the other hand, the people who were questioned clearly felt they had not managed to fit in. This self-perception is characterized by the attributes of diaspora: a people migrate from home; they are identified as different and classified into a certain group; and even though they have been dispersed, their community transcends space and national identification (Sökefeld 2006).

Another question arises: To what extent is diaspora necessarily about distance? Of course dispersion as such necessarily includes being distant from one another. But an often-implied prerequisite to qualify as a diaspora – that is, that an ocean or similar great distance has to separate people from their homeland – does not even hold true for the Jewish Diaspora.[23] No studies have as yet highlighted the Casamançais/Diola[24] diaspora in Dakar. This might be due to the fact that this label does not appear to be verifiable – there is no such thing as a fixed minority status. There are, on the contrary, many examples of individuals activating different layers to flexibly alter their transnational and regional identity according to the circumstances (de Jong 2002). Further, neither personal observation nor previous research shows that the Diola are more marginalized than any other ethnic group in Senegal (Diouf 1994).[25] Finally, even if diaspora is not about long-distance dispersion in theory, it might not be applicable as an analytical tool for short-distance diaspora in practice.

Nobody Is from Here

The above doubts seem justified after a closer look at a short-distance diaspora. Shifting focus from the national to the regional level to consider how individuals are identified in Ziguinchor, diaspora suddenly seems omnipresent. Ziguinchor is the capital of the region of the same name and is also the old capital of the Casamance (a region that has been divided to undercut the separatism cause linked to the old name). The city was founded by the Portuguese, who were the first

Europeans to colonize along the Casamance River. The Portuguese were never active administrators in the region, so present-day Ziguinchor is a relatively new city that has only recently experienced tremendous growth. Still, it began as a Portuguese settlement in a region where founding families are traditionally the landowners, who function as the hosts of whomever is a latecomer. Just as it is acknowledged that the Portuguese were the founders, it is common knowledge that the original population was Bainouk, who once maintained rice fields on the land now occupied by the Casamance capital. Therefore the Bainouk and their Creole descendants are considered the landowners.

'Ici, personne n'est d'ici',[26] a young man explained in Boudoudi, a neighbourhood in Ziguinchor.[27] 'Chacun a son village, c'est un rencontre, c'est le capital'.[28] All respondents to a survey in Boudoudi stated that they were from other villages.[29] A young man born in Dakar and bearing a common Bainouk name (patronym) declares himself to be from Brin, the next village. He visits his official home village '*régulièrement*', but even though it is only a few kilometres away, 'c'est ici que je connais plus'.[30] Boudoudi was among the original settlements, and one of its peculiarities is that after Senegalese independence, it was displaced to build government housing for '*fonctionnaires*' [civil servants]. Displacement in this case actually meant moving as little as two blocks – a hundred metres – back from the river into the rice paddies. The tiny neighbourhood of Boudoudi consists of two paved streets with modern apartment buildings between them, and a few dozen rather unstable houses behind the modern block. In other words, in Boudoudi the expropriated landowners live next to the land titleholders who profit from this displacement. This is especially interesting, considering that people continue to regard a northern governor's expropriation of Bainouk/Diola rice fields as the root cause of the conflict. It is said he gave the land to his compatriots from northern Senegal. The rice paddies were on the river, in swampland on both sides of the colonial harbour. The western side, right next to the governor's seat, is the neighbourhood of Boudoudi.

According to a common line of argumentation that classifies the conflict in the Casamance as a clash of interests between landlords and intruders, the antagonism between the two groups in Boudoudi is the conflict's flashpoint.[31] Boudoudi, in other words, is an open wound, a constant reminder of the problem underlying the Casamance conflict. But our survey in the neighbourhood showed that on both sides, people refer to their original villages outside Boudoudi in identifying themselves. That is, neither side feels as though it comes 'from there' – from Boudoudi. It is true that the 'northerners' are found only in the new part, but Creole/Bainouk/Diola as '*originaires du Ziguinchor*' live alongside them and with other original Casamançais in the new blocks as well. In other words, the very conflict that has cast the Diola in the role of conspirators, rebels, challengers of nation-building – and thus the very reason they are isolated as a de facto diaspora in Dakar – is said to be rooted in the expropriation perceptible

in Boudoudi; yet the division between Casamançais and northerners is far from visible in the very neighbourhood itself.

Diaspora or Latecomers?

If being amongst foreigners means being in a diaspora, then there could be a diaspora 'around every corner': a scattering from one's homeland might only be as far as the next village. Quaintly enough, in the Casamance, 'foreigner' essentially means anyone who does not belong to the same *quartier* or neighbourhood. 'When my father went to the next village [a stone's throw away] he took his arms with him'[32] was a common description of the hostile – and above all, isolated – situation that characterized villages in the region. By pointing to this oral history, to narratives of historic rivalries, to differences in the language and to specific customs separating one village (and often each *quartier*) from another, distinctions of exclusion can be claimed. In a similar matter but to a converse end, integration can be emphasized: by pointing to a common descent (from a village, or a region from which forefathers immigrated) or to a common resistance against outsiders (slave traders [Baum 1999] or French colonizers [Mark 1985: 66–67]), historic ties can be stressed in order to establish similarities and union with others. Depending on the specific context, the identification changes and expands, presenting a series of nesting categories: *quartier* (e.g. Djibonker) – village (e.g. Youtou) – kingdom (e.g. Bayot) – region (e.g. Kasa) – department (e.g. Ziguinchor) – nation (e.g. Casamance) – state (e.g. Senegal). It may appear complicated, but it is also the basic answer to the most common greeting: 'Kasumay (Peace), what is your name? Where are you from?' As to the efficacy of the label 'internal diaspora', one might argue that it makes little sense to speak of a migration next door, but in fact many internally displaced people live next door to one another in the Casamance, and they have in fact been dispersed by force. In the end it seems a matter of choice whether both characteristics are counted as a given or not.[33] Here violence is seen as a crucial element of the working definition, whereas a minimal distance (e.g. in kilometres) or a certain quality of distance (across an ocean) is not regarded as a prerequisite. Violence is counted as an element if it is perceived as such by the individuals concerned. The objective criterion for distance becomes a self-defined remoteness.

But what are the advantages to analysing a given situation relying on the categories of diaspora? Where does it make the picture sharper rather than more blurry to speak of diasporas? Landlord/stranger relations seem the more appropriate term in many cases. Therefore, applying the analytical term diaspora depends on which social condition you want to label.[34] Historically, Diaspora is about forced displacement and permanent migration from home.[35] And of course other terms might cover all of these conditions just as well. But diaspora is also characterized as a *social materialization* of a perceived/ascribed common point of

reference for identification. This point of reference provides a transnational mode of belonging, but at the same time it hinders the group from embracing the local identity.[36] This does not mean that the minority has no say in the label that is applied to them. But having been excluded from the majority's we-group, individuals have a big incentive to integrate themselves into the other-group in which they are categorized. For instance, your counterpart in the north might simply ignore your point of reference, say, Cabrousse, and insist on another label, say, Diola, Casaçais, or rebel.[37] You do not fit into his group; furthermore, you are integrated into another group – a negative of his, an 'other' group contrasted to 'us'.

Individuals react differently. They can accept and embrace their ascribed status as 'other', they can accept but still seek to alter this 'other' status, or they can seek to escape it. The escape option works in one of two ways. Individuals can lay claim to the 'we' group – a process observable, for example, in assimilation via assertion of common historic or ethnic affiliation by individuals among both the Diola and Wolof, who now claim to have emigrated from Egypt. Or individuals may seek to enter a different 'other' group – for example, to be identified as a (regional) Casamançais, or as a (transnationally orientated) youngster rather than accepting an (ethnic) identification as a Diola. The frame of reference and the situation define who you are. The question is to whom you are speaking, and under what circumstances. The same man may speak of the Senegalese as 'us' when he talks about himself as part of a Senegalese diaspora in France, but then refer to the Senegalese as 'them' ('who will never understand us [the Casamançais]') when discussing the conflict in the Casamance; then again, he may even refer to other Casamançais as 'them' when explaining the problem of being accepted as a true *originaire* (an autochthon) *de la Casamance* because of his untypical family name.

Differentiation of Otherness

Consideration of similarities to other diasporas and systematic comparison with the working definition of diaspora can aid the analysis of the situation and its consequences. This perspective might lead to an understanding of how identifications are prioritized. Let us keep in mind that migration does not lead automatically to the formation of a diaspora. Even if the stipulations of forced migration, subsequent minority status, anchors in the homeland and rudimentary transnational networks are met, assimilation is not impossible. The first benefit of focusing on the diaspora is the insight gained into a given society's capacity to accept integration. The question then becomes how flexible culturally constructed differences are.[38] Describing the ascribed and perceived attributes separating diaspora from the majority provides clues to the answer. On one hand are markers that are perceived to be essential for the majority (through a negative image of what constitutes group membership); on the other hand are the features of identification that bind the diaspora together. Looking at a diaspora such as that of

the Casamançais in Dakar, furthermore, makes differentiation markers salient when they otherwise would not be detectable. Simmel pointed out an often overlooked quality of strangers: The stranger is different by definition – he is strange, not like 'us', his 'otherness' is evident. But if the 'other' is similar and close, then distance and difference (in discourse) have to be reified more assertively. A self is established by boundaries that distinguish a similar other – not a complete stranger (Simmel 1992 [1908]). In sum, the less obvious the differences are, the more strongly they have to be affirmed. In other words, the less distinguishable the markers of differences are, the more explicit they must be.

The cases in the Casamance frontier zone seem to contradict this last point. Here we return to the observation of Daouda, the Casamançais living in Gambia who was quoted at the beginning of this chapter. Historically, the Diola population of Gambia has lived in the Brikama and Fogni region of Gambia – not in Banjul and Serrekunda. In the last decades the latter areas have seen a large influx of Gambian and Senegalese Diola migrants who nevertheless are not seen as foreigners – unlike migrants from Northern Senegal who also moved to these urban areas. Here one might reconsider the earlier quote describing the Gambian Diola as the 'first' historical natives – that is, as the true ancestors of Gambia. Even as the 'other' is a necessary asset to establish a self, the question of who is considered the 'other' obviously depends on the circumstances. The Gambian and the Senegalese Diola are not differentiated in the lines of argumentation observed. Rather, it seems that especially in the metropolitan area of Serrekunda, the dividing line does not run between national groups but between the 'indigenous' and the 'others'.[39] In this case the 'others' are usually 'Freetonians' or 'Nigerians'. But the national and linguistic markers of distinctions are subject to situational shifts: in one instance it is *them* the Francophones versus *us* the Anglophones, with Nigerians and Freetonians included in the latter group. But in another instance it is *us* 'the locals' or 'the indigenous' versus *them* the 'foreigners', assigning Mande, Diola and Wolof to the first group and the non-Gambian Anglophone population to the other.

The point is that the Casamançais groups do not figure as prominent 'other' groups. On the contrary, they are mostly subsumed into one's own group in order to prove autochthony. The Mande will stress that many Diola are often already considered Mande (e.g. in the Karon region), as they have adapted Mande traditions and language. This reference seemingly serves to substantiate the narrative of glorious Mande kingdoms of the past civilizing the region. The same pattern of autochthonization is observable within other ethnic groups: Peul who arrived from the Fouta Djallon highlands of Guinea-Conakry refer to the Casamançais Peul from the Fuladou region of Senegal to stress their autochthonous status, arguing that those Casamançais groups are more indigenous than the Mande, as indicated in Ousmane's statement earlier. Ultimately this is seen as proof that the Peul are more indigenous than the Mande. That is, there is a tendency to

integrate and co-opt the Casamançais in order to establish an autochthony that is recognized in Gambia.

How Firstcomers in the Casamance Become Latecomers in Senegal

The differing levels of integration in similar conditions (as in the region Senegambia, which is often regarded as a single historical and sociocultural entity) show how circumstances can be decisive. In such situations relatively slight dissimilarities may be highlighted to stress difference (Dakar), whereas in other situations (frontier Casamance) these same dissimilarities would be considered quite minor. In sum, it is obvious that the process of identification is different for migrants overseas, migrants within the nation, internally displaced people inside the homeland and transnational short-distance migrants (see below). People living across the border as refugees showed many parallels with people living in Dakar in diaspora, but the Diola living in exile across the border in Gambia and Guinea-Bissau showed more integrative qualities than members of the diaspora in Dakar. The hypothesis is that they embody transnational ties, because they are the majority and 'at home'. Another observation underlines how surrounding conditions, rather than the features themselves, define the quality of a marker: if virtually everywhere 'nobody comes from here', then a factor that sets you apart from the majority in Dakar binds you together in Ziguinchor. In both cities a majority of residents are immigrants, but obviously the identification as a Casamançais and a Senegalese is different. In Dakar it was much harder to speak about the Casamance in the first place. People were much more suspicious and unwilling to talk about their identification. But differences with the north were hardly ever mentioned in the Casamance, even though it is the place where people suffer from the conflict (said to be caused by those very differences). In Dakar it was much easier to get an idea of what binds the Casamançais together and to isolate their respective markers (beyond a common fate through an external threat). Different groups in Dakar were set apart (and assimilated them into smaller units, sometimes even antagonistic ones) by the same condition that brought them together in Ziguinchor – namely, not being from the place they lived in.

The research findings encircle what appears to be the crucial element for analysis: the identification Casamançais, a category that has unquestionably been used. Currently, this category is closely linked to the Casamance conflict. The political wing of the Casamance rebels always claim to have been fighting for the values that the Senegalese nation inherited from the French: *Liberté, égalité, fraternité!* Even though the population has been subjected to discrimination on an ethnic base, the rebels have not played the ethnic card – for example to draft or to 'motivate' combatants.[40] Instead they have chosen to criticize the state for betraying these values and failing to fully integrate its citizens. But how, then, are the ranks of the rebels filled, if not on an ethnic, religious, generation, class

or clan basis? What actually ties individuals together? Who claims autonomy or independence? The research found a common denominator: identification as Casamançais (Rudolf 2013). In this case then – to grasp the markers – the study of the diaspora in Dakar turned out to be the most rewarding. The identification Casamançais proved to be based on common cultural practices, similar sociopolitical systems, a common ascribed label and a common self-identification embracing this label.[41]

The hypothesis shows that this Casamançais identity sustains itself – apart from exclusion and discrimination – by performances, especially initiation rituals through which the community is united and reified (Mark, de Jong and Chupin 1998; de Jong 2007; Mark 1992, 1994). To do so, Casamançais from every part of their diaspora must make an effort to return to their village of origin in the Casamance in order to participate; in this way the entire extended family is able to contribute. Extended family members then live together for a time, whereby the community becomes visible, graspable and enacted repeatedly. Casamançais themselves often point to participation in life-cycle rituals, even those co-organized with different ethnic groups, as a strong identification marker. Such opinions should be accepted as valid, for the performance – the joint experience of community, of singing, dancing and eating together and being a part of the organization team – should not be underestimated.[42] Identity is by and large performed; it is both reified and recognized in performances.[43]

Conclusion: Diaspora as an Analytical Tool

Studying the various levels of integration experienced in differing contexts in diasporas has proven to be fruitful, with social mechanisms becoming salient and underlying structures being revealed. Examples in the region at issue indicate that diaspora is not the opposite of integration; rather, carrying out research in a diaspora is an outstanding approach for understanding the conditions that do or do not exist for integration. For its recent nation-building, Sierra Leone has deployed a Krio-diaspora identity and language to unify people (Knörr 2010). The role of the Creole in Guinea-Bissau has been similar. Even though the creole identity has never been proclaimed as a unifying model in this case, it has nonetheless played an implicitly decisive role in nation-building (Trajano Filho 2010). As a clearly formulated category, diaspora as an analytical term can be used to assess social identifications across neighbourhoods and the Seven Seas alike.[44] In analysing identification, its advantage over other categories is that diaspora captures a trans(across/beyond)-national/regional/local dimension, whether as a tacit or explicit identification, that in regard to the prioritized national identity provides its group members with an exit option that would not have been apparent otherwise.

Looking only at how genealogies, language, religion, ethnicity and so on differ among the Diola, Peul, Balanta and Manjacos in Dakar, one cannot grasp

their common reference of regional identification and subsequently cannot comprehend the grounds on which individuals refer to this identity. How many of the Casamançais actually identify themselves with this marker? How many are identified as such, and by whom and for how long? Whether living in the region or in the diaspora, how many of them oppose, ignore, sympathize or support the secession movement? Many answers to these questions depend on the circumstances in which markers are identified and appropriated by actors to include members in a group or exclude them from it (Donahoe et al. 2009). But the sine qua non for an analytical understanding in this regard is to identify what it is that qualifies an individual for, or disqualifies an individual from, membership.[45]

The genesis of social groups and their boundaries, markers, and identification of actors, or in other words their dynamic evolution, is central to anthropological research and analysis. Periods of rapid social change have been identified as especially suitable for discerning group boundary mechanisms (Schlee 2004, 2010). The analysis of diaspora holds similar promise for facilitating understanding of the relative importance that actors attribute to different identifications. The examples presented herein furthermore should make clear that a case study of instances where nation-building fails to integrate its subjects (and make them national) has wider implications for difficulties that the 'nation-state' model faces today, not only in postcolonial nations but virtually everywhere.

Acknowledgements

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Notes

1. All names are changed to guarantee anonymity. Interview Ziguinchor, 2009.
2. The English translations provided here are based on recollections of conversations that were recorded in writing later. The French quotes are as faithful to the original structure

and style of the spoken word as possible, even though the language used may not be grammatically correct.

3. Gambia is completely contained within Senegalese territory, except for its short western border where it meets the Atlantic Ocean. The Senegalese territory south of Gambia, stretching to the border with Guinea-Bissau and cut off from the north of Senegal by Gambia, is the region of Casamance. It comprises the greatest density of ethnic groups in Senegal, of which the Diola is the dominant ethnicity. The north in turn has a different ethnic, religious, climatic and social mosaic, and here the Wolof are the most prominent. A low-grade conflict between those two parts of Senegal has plagued the country since 1982, occasionally affecting and involving the neighbouring countries of Gambia and Guinea-Bissau.

4. Identification here points to a process. The term 'identity' in turn is understood as the result of this process. As a social fact both the process and the result are seen as fluid, dynamic and situational (for a deeper discussion of this issue, see Richard Jenkins 2000; Brubaker and Cooper 2000; Donahoe et al. 2009).

5. The uppercase 'Diaspora' is used here for the paradigmatic cases, while the lowercase 'diaspora(s)' is used elsewhere.

6. In other words, the Casamançais include those who refer to villages in the Casamance as their places of origin.

7. The terms 'autochthon' and 'native' are used synonymously here; both are rarely used in the Casamance. Usually the differentiation is made through labels: 'we/them'; 'from here/not from here'; 'they come from …', 'they originate in …'. In Gambia the term 'indigenous' is used, while generally in Senegal (outside of the Casamance) 'autochthon' is used. In both cases it is assumed everybody knows who is native and who is not. Yet, the flexibility of boundaries is astonishing.

8. Both the Wolof and the Peul are not uncommon in the region. There are Wolof villages (such as Loudia Wolof) in the Casamance, and the Wolof are numerous in Gambia. The Peul (also called the Fula) are the majority in the Fulada region of Casamance, and since this region is between Gambia and Guinea-Conakry, the Peul/Fula from the area are considered in-between as well: as Casamançais, they are autochthons to the Senegambia region and are differentiated from the more 'fair-skinned' Peul/Fula from Guinea-Conakry, mostly traders who are considered foreigners. It is interesting to note that many complaints about *Wolofization* – that is, the ever increasing influence of the Wolof people and Wolof language – are also linked to their position in trade.

9. The best-known example of a diaspora claiming its own nation-state is the Kurds. Their relation to the homeland and self-image is considerably different from other examples (Wahlbeck 2002; Alinia 2004; Curtis 2005). Other, less prominent cases, such as the Parsi and Ismaili communities, are equally interesting for comparison regarding the concept of homeland and transnational nationalism (Hinnells 1994; Kassam-Remtulla 1999; Falzon 2003).

10. Hobsbawm, Anderson and others have shown how nation-building is grounded in a primordial, essentialist and ex post explanation (discourse) of the status quo: A rigid national history is constructed from the present ex post: natural national identity stretches back through time (Kohn 1967; Hobsbawm 1992; Tilly 1992; Anderson 1999).

11. From the Oxford Dictionaries Online (2010):

     diaspora(dias|pora), Pronunciation:/dʌɪˈasp(ə)rə. *Noun* (often the Diaspora): Jews living outside Israel. The dispersion of the Jews beyond Israel. The dispersion or spread of any people from their original homeland. People who have spread or been dispersed from their homeland.

The main diaspora began in the 8th–6th centuries BC, and even before the sack of Jerusalem in AD 70, the number of Jews dispersed by the diaspora was greater than that living in Israel. …

Origin: Greek, from diaspeirein 'disperse', from *dia* 'across' + *speirein* 'scatter'. The term originated in the Septuagint (Deuteronomy 28:25) in the phrase *esē diaspora en pasais basileias tēs gēs* 'thou shalt be a dispersion in all kingdoms of the earth'.

12. The four characteristics chosen are both specific enough to distinguish diasporas from other transnational groups and broad enough not to be confined to a single case, as to a certain extent are Safran's (1991) often-cited six points. This essay intends to show whether this working definition is of any value for comparative analysis.

13. Whether an immigrant should take his bride and consequently establish his family abroad, too, is a matter of discussion among Senegalese. Most men nowadays feel that women become 'uncontrollable' once they live in Europe or North America. Therefore the preferred model is to build a house and leave the spouse(s) and children in the country of origin. Female migration differs: It is virtually confined to seasonal work in the region or to 'follow a Toubab' (a white man). In the first case the immigrant is without children, and the second entails the question of establishing a family, predating migration, and guarantees its permanency (Fleischer 2008).

14. For a better understanding of the context in Senegal see Lambert (2002) and Wabgou (2008); for the role of remittances see Jettinger (2005); and for Italy see Sinatti (2006).

15. This of course is a stereotype not shared by or valid for all individuals.

16. Whoever has been to Senegal has observed the greeting ceremony in which, after questions on well-being, there inevitably follow questions on name, last name and origin. These are the coordinates used to position the communication partner and eventually discover links to individual networks.

17. 'People said I am a *Nordiste.* They do not know anything. I told them you are mad, I am from here. I grew up here. I had to explain myself. … Diamacoune told about a great warrior once upon time' (interview, Paris, September 2009).

18. Evans and Foucher, among others, offer brief summaries of the complex Casamance conflict (Evans 2003; Foucher 2007).

19. 'The *Nordistes,* they are racists. It is not like here. They call you a rebel. All the Casaçais are rebels for them. You are insulted. They do not know Cabrousse – where it is. The conflict, that are the northerners … they direct everything. You cannot do anything … I speak Wolof better than they do. But if they hear Diola … It is better at home' (Diatta, interview in Cabrousse, March 2011).

20. This decision was reached a year after participating in his home village's Bukut, a Diola initiation ritual that plays a central role in the process of identification as Casamançais (Rudolf 2014).

21. Nevertheless, the Diola are far from unanimous in their approach to living in Dakar. Many in fact do try to mingle and become less noticeable. This might cause biased results: the individual identification depends on the circumstances, and the survey was not representative. But the issue here is not whether all Diola feel and act as a tightly organized diaspora, but whether the conditions are such that they are encouraged to do so, and how much individuals are aware of it.

22. It might be argued that an already high level of integration into the modern system of education and public work is a precondition for individuals to perceive themselves as lagging behind. Playing according to the rules sets the ground for aspirations that in the end cause individuals to feel alienated and consequently to distance themselves.

23. What tends to be overlooked in the classical definitions closely attached to the historic Jewish case is that even Jews who were living in the homeland, e.g., in Jerusalem, could be considered part of the Diaspora because they were not living in a Jewish state. The same could be said for the Orthodox to this very day; only the Messiah can lead them out of the Diaspora.

24. For a number of reasons Diola and Casamançais are often equated. First, as has been shown, outsiders tend to equate the Diola and Casamançais in everyday practice. Numerous people outside the Casamance, especially in the north of Senegal, affirmed this stereotype: 'Casamançais? – the Diola. Like here in Fatick people are called Fatickois. Here everybody is Serer. There they are Diola' (interview, Fatick, February 2011). Second, on a political level the government demonized the secession movement as an ethnic uprising and blamed the Diola along with the Casamançais: according to the government's logic the two groups are essentially the same, so if one group is labelled as rebels, the other is too. Third, no research has been done exclusively on the Casamançais as such. The vast majority of the comparative studies in what now is the Département de Ziguinchor are mostly filed under the label Diola.

25. Studies have shown that the Diola are better educated and better integrated into the state apparatus than other ethnic groups in many aspects, but there are no studies focusing on other Casamance ethnic groups such as the Balanta, Manjacos and so on, which are usually subsumed under Guinea-Bissau.

26. 'Here [in Ziguinchor] nobody is from here'.

27. Sagna, Boudoudi – various interviews, February–September 2008.

28. 'Everybody has his village, this is a meeting point, it is the capital'.

29. Survey conducted in Boudoudi households in 2008.

30. 'Regularly'/ 'It is here I know better'.

31. The landlord/stranger relation in general (Mouser 1975), as in a diachronic analysis, is of particular interest in the Casamance – especially with regard to the question of who owns land. During its history the region has seen many invasions (Mark 1985). Many regional inhabitants fled to remote backwater islands and often ended up settling there. Current points of contention are land issues regarding hotels (Cabrousse), the question of national borders for the purposes of farming rights (along the southern border) and the previously mentioned claim that the northerners had taken land from the southerners. Furthermore, fierce disputes between villages revolve around whether land was loaned or given away permanently, based on historical founder/latecomer claims. A thorough historical study of these cases, as they play out in modern courtrooms, would prove illuminating.

32. Interview with a villager from Ediongou, August 2008.

33. Diaspora is not solely about being dispersed over a great distance, as has been pointed out. Nevertheless distance might well be the most crucial element of dispersion to consider in the future. Modern means of communication have made distance more relative than ever. Isolation of minorities who have migrated from their homelands is therefore greatly reduced. In the global village, the sheer abundance of means of transnational communication affects integration more than anything else. Whereas transnational orientation among migrants (often already in the second and third generations) used to be the exception – and mostly was due to religious beliefs – it could become the rule, simply because distance from the homeland has shrunk in manifold ways.

34. Migrant is the encompassing entity, and landlord/stranger the encompassing relationship. Both are preconditions but do not necessarily produce conditions for a diaspora – the question is how and when these conditions are met.

35. Consequences of the transatlantic slave trade have been studied in this region, but the role of the Diola diaspora has drawn comparatively less attention in the social sciences. Focusing on transregional or transnational ties, however, furthers understanding of the mechanisms of group boundaries, their construction and their origins. Discussion of the ties between the diaspora and the rebellion has been quite heated in Senegal (see articles on the extradition of Nkrumah in the newspaper *WalFadjri*: http://www.walf.sn/poli tique/suite.php?rub=2&id_art=63020).

36. It is important to keep in mind that reification of identification markers depends on established categories of *self* and *others* according to the situation (Elwert 2002).

37. 'Casaçais' is the colloquial form for Casamançais, while 'rebel' is a derogatory label that politicians, military and police affix to individuals who refer to themselves as combatants. While Casaçais and Diola are categories of identification for both members and outsiders, rebel is simply a discriminatory label that excludes individuals from the community.

38. Social reality is understood here to be constructed, which does not imply any judgement about reality, that is, about the basis of the constructs. It simply acknowledges that our access is a culturally defined one, and therefore that no insights into anything outside of social reality can be offered (Searle 1995; Berger and Luckmann 2003). But even if social reality in general and the consequent specific identifications are always subjectively constructed, this does not imply that identifications as 'we' and 'others' cannot rise to the level of great importance – or even become a matter of death or life – for the individuals involved.

39. In his diachronic analysis of this region, Nugent (2007) showed how its transborder quality has always been a decisive historical feature for its inhabitants.

40. Given the record of ethnic clashes in modern Africa, this seems extraordinary, and all the more so as there was a concerted policy to discriminate against the Diola – virtually all Diola have such experiences to relate.

41. The four (fluid) markers for identification identified thus far include the following: (1) place of origin – marked by the *quartiers*' oral history of the origin of ancestors; (2) common cultural events such as rituals – which the whole neighbourhood usually attends or follows; (3) common suffering – grievances caused by livelihood, historical geopolitics, the current conflict and so on; and (4) identification imposed by outsiders that assigns someone to a particular ethnic or regional group such as the Diola and later the Casamançais.

42. Actually the hypothesis is that performance is the point where *Identifizierung* –interpersonal identification marking (being identifiable due to markers) – and *Identifikation* – intrapersonal self-identification (identifying oneself with markers) – can occur (Leary 2003). The relation and interaction between *Identifizierung* and *Identifikation,* in a dialectical relation with imposed social restrictions, is decisive for individuals' flexibility to choose, alter and switch identification.

43. While such an opinion can be accepted as valid, its propagated qualities have to be differentiated: even though these markers are often explicitly called traditions, they nevertheless are flexible and fluid (cf. de Jong 2002).

44. The analysis of diasporas evidently helps to answer certain questions of nation-building. Is it possible for individuals to live in a certain nation-state and yet retain different loyalties? When does the prioritized national identification become relevant to such an extent that it becomes problematic for those who do not accept it? Which circumstances favour a diaspora's upholding of its status instead of assimilating?

45. To provide another example relative to the Diaspora from which the word originates: if one had considered the different ethnic or clan-based identifications in Ethiopia to assess the alternatives of individuals and predict possible conflict lines and alliances in the

1980s and 1990s, one would have been surprised to find that the exit option for some individuals was to claim an identity enabling them to immigrate to Israel (Abbink 1990). Specifically, the Falasha claimed to belong to Israel tribes that have been considered 'lost' because the Bible does not mention them after the Babylonian captivity. The interesting twist concluding this chapter is that they were able to pursue their exit option by referring to the original Diaspora narrative.

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Chapter 6

The African 'Other'
in the Cape Verde Islands

Interaction, Integration and
the Forging of an Immigration Policy

Pedro F. Marcelino

Why Cape Verde?

Irregular immigration and its root causes have become a political concern in the Cape Verde Islands. One might be inclined to ask why migrants come. The simple answer is that they come because the islands are there. It is a matter of geography. After 9/11, the paradigm of migration shifted, not only in North America but also, crucially, in Europe. Through a wide array of bilateral and multilateral agreements, individual European Union countries and the EU as a whole have managed to export their own migratory pressures to a belt of buffer nations in their immediate (and remote) vicinity: countries like Morocco, Libya, Turkey and, more recently, Mauritania and the Cape Verde Islands.

Europe's increasingly securitized and externalized immigration policies, along with the consequent pushing of its southernmost border farther south to North Africa, have caused trans-Saharan migration routes and networks to gradually shift westwards towards Morocco and Algeria, then southwards to the Western Sahara and Mauritania, and increasingly also to the Cape Verde Islands. Continental African migrants are today a conspicuous sight in Cape Verde's main urban and tourist areas, part of a fluid ethnoscape facilitated by a new geopolitical nexus encompassing West Africa, the Mediterranean and the Maghreb, and perhaps justifying the assertion that Europe's de facto southern borders have now been pushed to Africa, making Cape Verde (among other countries) a rather incomplete proxy to – and a tool of – its own extemporaneous immigration policies.

This chapter attempts to map out a pivotal contemporary moment in national discourse as the country changes from being a net exporter of migrants to a net receiver, or at least a trans-shipment centre for transit migrants. Many among them indeed enter the country legally under existing open-borders agreements

within the regional body ECOWAS.[1] Unable to reach Europe from the islands, however, a majority eventually overstay their legal welcome. Thus becoming irregular aliens *after* entering the country, they are locked into a permanent state of legal limbo, informal incorporation and a bare life of sorts.

Some choose to return home, while some cannot. The remaining ratio constitutes a group of increasingly disenfranchised denizens who are effectively – albeit inadvertently – challenging national self-concepts and even the idea of a unique 'Capeverdeanness' (Marcelino 2009: 56–62). The confluence of the socioeconomic and ethno-racial dimensions is, this chapter argues, a primary reason for exclusion. Exclusion, however, will not prevent destitute but entrepreneurial foreigners (particularly not those from nearby nations) from entering the country, legally or illegally, and thereafter asserting their own identities, engaging in a fluid renegotiation of what becomes an ongoing hybridization of themselves and of Capeverdeanness itself. Once they are in the islands, the integration process is already underway. Cecil Foster notes that

> each time an immigrant arrives … at least two things happen: [first] [s]he seeks to re-open and even restructure the compact that is the existing social order. Consensus, no matter how long it had taken to achieve, is threatened. And if there are many of them and the state is truly democratic, the new arrivals should be able to undo, rewrite, to change the constitution and the social order. … Second, the immigrant revitalizes older communities within the state by daily reinserting them into a Diaspora of some kind, so that links with a motherland or fatherland that might atrophy with time are constantly renewed and re-freshened. … So through immigration, [national identity] is always in the state of becoming [and] the culture statewide is never settled. (Foster 2010)

This chapter attempts to debunk some of the myths related to Cape Verde's 'traditional' racial blindness,[2] and to what could be termed 'hybridism' (Marcelino 2009: 61) or an ideology of migration and innate tolerance and hospitality (*morabeza*) that often appears to be used in key Cape Verdean opinion-making circles as a justification to deny the existence of any racist undertones in current events in the islands while still enabling or excusing racialized discourses on 'otherness', 'invasion', and 'crime'. These challenges strengthen the vitality of the Cape Verdean case study as a liminal and transitional space where the dynamics and interconnectedness of migration, economic development and economic aspirations, integration, exclusion and xenophobia are representative of the struggles elsewhere in the world. In the words of Jason DeParle (2007) 'the intensity of the national experience makes this barren archipelago the Galapagos of migration, a microcosm of the forces straining … politics and remaking societies across the globe.'

Debunking Migrant Typologies

Discussing migrant integration in Cape Verde requires the definition of a theoretical framework of migrant categories to explain why migrants elicit one reaction over another. It is paramount to underline that despite the existence of informally organized – and only insufficiently studied – cooperation circles among sub-Saharan migrants in Cape Verde, this remains an inchoately connected transnational community immersed in what Pedro Góis (2005) characterized as the practice of 'low intensity transnationalism' and Gina Sánchez Gibau (2008: 260–65) called a 'dispersed nation' and a 'fractured diaspora'. In other words, this community is an ensemble of various diasporic nodes closely knit with their respective home communities, bound by a migration project represented by one of their own, and interacting across its different nodes – perhaps a friend or relative in Rome, Paris, or Madrid – but with limited access to and contact with the host communities. The latter characteristic reduces the potential for integration, inclusion and vertical mobility, curbing the ability for upwards movement through hierarchies and statuses.

Of course this does not mean that social ascension is not an objective of sub-Saharan migrants. Indeed, social prestige is an often overlooked but increasingly salient and significant force in perpetuating migration. 'Social prestige' in sending communities is a significant component of increasing aspirations to migrate, while 'social expectations' function as one of the most cited reasons to maintain one's migration and continue one's journey, geographically and socially, usually across several years in transit. As migratory routes and strategies for reaching their destinations become increasingly complex and costly, migration pressure may decline in sending communities. However, the one-dimensional presumption of exclusively economic reasons for the departure/arrival of labour migrants is insufficient to describe a complex portfolio of motivations and aspirations. Further, this assumption obfuscates the finding that, *grosso modo,* those who migrate are not the poorest of the poor (e.g. Nieswand 2011), as it often fails to consider 'social meanings' of migration that go well beyond economic motivations.[3] This is perhaps not lost on Cape Verdeans, who are newly a host community and still a nation of migrants that continues to export its own (albeit to a lesser extent). The motivations of sub-Saharan migrants are thus easier to grasp and identify with. The hardship of the migratory experience is a common ordeal understood by locals, who often have friends and relatives abroad and are therefore acquainted with unspoken but easily comprehended narratives of sacrifice and endurance.

A certain level of understanding should not, however, be mistaken with the unconditional acceptance of the migrants' presence. Sub-Saharans in Cape Verde are often exposed to a paradox of cooperation and competition with locals. This nexus of solidarity and animosity, collaboration and competition, inclusion and

exclusion urges a closer look at the typologies of migrants arriving in Cape Verde. It is apparent, for instance, that there is an almost complete absence of a discourse on refuge. Formally and informally, everyone is branded as an economic migrant and thus assumed to be in the country illegally.[4] This lack of understanding of the realities affecting those who factually are already part of the national ethnoscape is indicative of the level of formal disengagement still existing in the country at the levels of policy and the public. The absence of a public discourse on refuge and asylum to counterbalance that of simple migration is perhaps attributable to the country's geographic isolation, but the same does not apply to categorizations of 'clandestine', 'undocumented', 'irregular' and 'illegal' immigrants. Cape Verdeans themselves have rarely abandoned the country in these latter circumstances, but they certainly have an understanding of their tremendous liminality. Why, then, the hesitation? Might it be related to the stress induced by a transformation from a net sender to a net receiver?

The Migration Dilemma: From Emigration to Immigration

How do microstates respond to migration? How do they address and cope with the complex effects of migration on development, and how do they address the multiple consequences of immigration, economic struggles and identity? These are some of the dilemmas facing the tiny insular republic of Cape Verde. These questions, already deeply embedded in Cape Verdean history, came into sharper focus in 1991, when the archipelago was among the encouraging cluster of sub-Saharan African nations holding free elections for the first time. A new government was elected on a platform that promised to push through a series of democratizing bills and introduce neoliberal economic reforms conducive to a business-friendly environment. Over the following decade, direct foreign investment and development aid packages poured in – at first from Europe, the United States and supranational organizations, and later from China, Japan, Brazil and even Angola – often branded as technical cooperation packages. Twenty years later the quality of the country's democracy compares favourably with that of most of its African peers, and a sizeable section of the population has been lifted out of the most abject poverty and is living comfortably by regional standards, with a substantially higher yearly income per capita (see e.g. Economist Intelligence Unit 2008; Afrobarometer 2004).

Whereas neoliberal economic reforms modelled after Europe's effectively brought about immediate economic growth, they also partially alienated the social democracy drive of the early years of independence under the African Party for the Independence of Cape Verde (Davidson 1989: 127–201). Chronically high unemployment levels associated with rural poverty continue to be the archipelago's Achilles' heel, disproportionably affecting the country's peasant majority. Unequal income distribution has become increasingly apparent, even conspicu-

ous, in the suburbs of Cape Verde's main urban areas in the last few years (International Fund for Agricultural Development 2006). These examples of uneven development are reinforced by the booming tourism and real estate industries, which feed an economy with above-average growth rates – even at a time of global economic crisis – affording the impression that in this little nation, life is indeed slowly becoming easier than in many of the neighbouring countries.

Indeed, it is not simply institutional partners that are complimentary about the stability and unlikely success of this tiny nation. The narrative has also been fed to, or picked up and widely disseminated by, European and world media. Among migrant networks in West Africa, word seems to have spread that Cape Verde is a desirable temporary destination, or perhaps a preferable transit option in the long journey north, at a time when the Mediterranean border, staunchly patrolled by FRONTEX and other European outfits, is slowly closing, increasingly militarized and openly hostile. Consequently, besides enduring the growing pains that attend any major economic restructuring, Cape Verde has had to learn how to cope with a fast inflow of migrants, many of them waiting to set off to the Canaries. Some have now waited so long that they might eventually be accommodating to a quasi-permanent state of temporary settlement.

Many Cape Verdeans see the newcomers as living off *expedientes* or shady business, whether it is street selling (a contentious image issue in tourist-rich islands), sex work or worse. These have become stereotypes by which African migrants are identified, and a narrative that is often reproduced across all levels of society, though few Cape Verdeans encounter any migrants beyond the occasional bargaining with them in the market or the street. In reality, many West African migrants sell commodities. Others market African cultural goods to Cape Verdeans and tourists alike in the streets of Praia (Santiago) and Mindelo (São Vicente) and in the sandy hotspots of Sal and Boa Vista Islands, and many others work across a wide spectrum of economic activities. Despite their different characteristics, none of the islands has a simple path to recognition or any easy route towards integration.

Senegalese migrants might occupy an ever-so-slightly advantageous position in Cape Verde. Some were or are frontrunners of the successful Senegalese merchant diaspora, who have become de facto cultural brokers between the two neighbouring countries. Still others work in menial or occasional jobs in construction or cleaning, and in an array of other activities in the informal sector. Most of these jobs are precarious and quickly vanish in a weak economy, either because a large construction project is halted, or because a cleaning job previously held by an African woman is suddenly given to an unemployed Cape Verdean, upholding long-standing ties of solidarity. Covert and even overt xenophobia (with clear ethnic contours) aimed at mainland Africans is on the rise and is perhaps, as Bruce Baker posits, a notorious exception to Cape Verde's apparent ethnic harmony (Baker 2006: 503–4). Interestingly, among educated or affluent

Africans with access to visible financial resources, the path to acceptance as a 'worthy' member of society seems to be eased. These generally enter with higher social positions and are gradually integrated into local social networks. This applies to Angolans, for example, who share a common language and colonial past with Cape Verdeans and often arrive as skilled professionals. It does not, however, extend to Bissauans, whose country shares similar ethnic markers and even a former political union with Cape Verde. In this case, the ethno-racial indicator seems to play a strong role in determining the speed and level of acceptance and integration,[5] but this role is a function of the socioeconomic indicator.

There seems to be little correlation between Cape Verde's migratory narrative – an ideology of migration so central to the social fabric that it has become the national community's central grammar (e.g. Carling and Åkesson 2009) – and its receptivity and tolerance towards immigrants. The country's fabled hospitality towards strangers and foreigners, called *morabeza,* appears to be reserved for selected groups of people, reifying the idea that migrants' physical appearance and perceived social class, entrance status and socioeconomic entry level are key indicators in defining ethnic integration, reflecting a kind of *migrant pedigree* attributed to them and begetting different degrees of receptivity.

This fundamental discrepancy – between an ongoing renegotiation of national and ethnic identities on the one hand and the processes of material inclusion and exclusion on the other – highlights Cape Verde's interest as a case study. Unlike other newcomers to the islands, Africans force the debate on identity – on what Cape Verde is and what it is not. Although Europeans carry the cultural load of a colonial past and have imported gentrification and 'space war' issues to all four islands mentioned above – Santiago, São Vicente, Sal and Boa Vista –, their presence is equally aspirational, pushing the envelope of self-identification with European habits and European economic success that have historically stomped Africanity out of the equation, at the symbolic level at least. Evidence suggests that, while quintessentially syncretic as a society, Cape Verdeans might tacitly regard their country as 'more civilized' than others on the mainland. The dimensions of this understanding are political, economic and social, but undoubtedly carry an ethno-racial undertone as well. Thus the European component of migrant stock is seen as familiar while the inflow of African migrants is seen as alien.

Ghettos of Difference, Illegality and (Not Much) Understanding

The task of stopping undocumented immigration in Cape Verde will not be easier – or cheaper, for that matter – than it is in Europe, even when new resources are regularly added to the arsenal accessible to the state. It is, however, a fundamental predicament. At this juncture, Cape Verdean society is deeply divided between pan-African ideals of solidarity and somewhat understandable but unjustified apprehension.

Although the powerful imagery of rickety boats loaded with frightened, exhausted faces is as pervasive in local popular discourse as it is on international media, this is certainly not the only, and possibly not the most common, method of accessing the islands. Boats have, however, been intercepted or known to arrive at the islands of Sal, Boa Vista, and Maio (the three closest to the continent), while others are reported to have landed at São Vicente – the main transit hub for migrants attempting to reach the Canaries – and at the largely inaccessible and recessed Santo Antão.

The desperation and bravery of these voyages does not go unnoticed by the average Cape Verdean. In almost every interview conducted in the streets of Mindelo, the country's second largest city, Cape Verdeans of both genders, young and old, employed and unemployed, showed that they understood why African migrants seek the islands, as epitomized in this interviewee's empathetic statement: 'Their countries are in constant disarray, and that's why they come to Cape Verde. We're not rich, but at least life is peaceful here'. Yet because Africans follow the same internal migration routes that Cape Verdeans do, pressure inevitably falls on the same locations (see Figure 6.1).

Boa Vista is a prime example of the dire consequences of these unregulated flows and of the lack or preparation of local authorities. On this island, paradisiacal luxury hotels and affluent residential developments are surrounded by
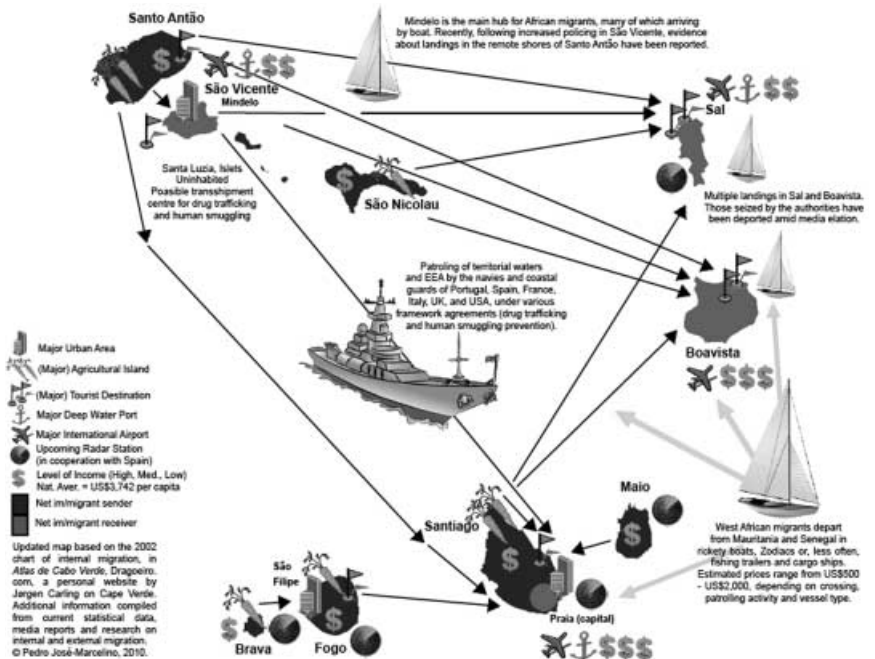
Figure 6.1. (1) Internal migration routes and internal migration incentives; (2) irregular migration ship/zodiac routes from West Africa.

pristine sand dunes peppered with date trees. Once paraded as the country's crown jewel, Boa Vista today boasts one of the highest costs of living in the country – fuelled by its tourism industry[6] – and is beginning to exhibit 'unexpected' symptoms of social conflict. Nowhere in the archipelago is the disparity between rich and poor as shocking as in this large, sparsely populated island. Almost every African who has landed, directly or indirectly, at Boa Vista has ended up segregated in the outlying shantytown of Barraca (which means 'shanty'). Official estimates in 2008 put the local population at over 3,000 and growing daily, but the actual number was thought to be closer to 4,000–4,500, mostly African migrants of undefined provenance and rural islanders from Santiago. In February 2010 a study ordered by the Ministry of Housing and Territorial Planning and conducted by the Cape Verdean consultancy firm AfroSondagem and the Laboratory for Civil Engineering revealed that the number of inhabitants was probably just around 2,800, dispelling fears that the migrant population was about to outnumber locals. Still, faced with few possibilities, the community is rife with unemployment, malnourishment, infectious diseases, alcoholism, drug abuse and drug trafficking, as well as petty and violent criminality. Worryingly, and predictably, as the economic crisis settled in, violent criminality overflowed the boundaries of this isolated ghetto into the island's main urban centre, the small town of Sal-Rei, 'risking', according to local inhabitants, 'spoiling Boa Vista's positive image and damaging its tourism potential' (Frederico 2010). Municipal authorities confess to not having the capability to resolve this urban time bomb – a flagship case of immigration mismanagement. Meanwhile, much of the public discourse on Barraca to date seems to revolve around the consequences of negative projections to the exterior rather than focus on ongoing integration and exclusion processes.

All African, But Not So Fast: Contrasting Voices of Acceptance

Since accurate figures on legal and illegal migrants are hard to obtain, it might be productive to step back from these limitations and observe the phenomenon from a different vantage point to gain a better comparative understanding of the social landscape. The probabilistic framework I am thus proposing is admittedly based on a combination of partial statistical information, empirical observation and soft data from different sources and time periods. This data, though surely stronger for some issues than for others, is sufficiently compelling to put forward a tentative model. It does not constitute any type of definitive conclusion on the subject but rather serves as a preliminary graphic layout of these early findings, intended to open up the debate on an issue that has not been adequately explored in this context. The model will require further proofing pending the availability of solid data, whether absolute numbers or feasible and methodologically sound statistical projections. Considering the attention both the Cape Verdean govern-

ment and the EU are now affording to the issue of immigration, greater precision is expected and necessary from the extensive Population Census 2010, with results available later in the year.

The integration/exclusion model (see Figure 6.2) suggests that there is a correlation between migrants' occupation – or stereotyped (perceived) occupation – and nationality/ethnicity, and the level of acceptance, interaction, and tolerance of migrants in Cape Verdean society. The central part of the chart indicates the history of the community in Cape Verde, its main (perceived) occupation(s) and the relative social standing associated with it. The column on the right indicates different levels of integration in the Cape Verdean social fabric. This is a fluid continuum, variable across communities, even within each of them, and possibly across time periods, as there are always individuals who do not fit a model, and must therefore be assumed to be exceptions that confirm the rule.

Following this model, some patterns emerge: positive perceptions of non-European foreigners appear to be stronger for communities that either are very small and thus not noticeable (e.g. Cubans) or have a long history of interaction and settlement in Cape Verde (e.g. Lebanese). Ethnicity does not seem to deter integration, although the case of continental African migrants appears to be an exception. Still, newcomers with a high professional status or substantial capital might be directly inducted into higher levels of acceptance, regardless of their ethnicity (e.g. Angolans). Education can, in fact, trump race, as the significance of 'black' and 'white' in Creole as social rather than racial tropes suggests. Those coming from some Portuguese-speaking nations appear to have easier access to a 'fast-track' integration process. Hence, Angolans (despite their ethnicity) are fairly well integrated. Conversely, other African migrants – Bissauans perhaps excluded – generally have little personal contact with Cape Verdeans beyond simple interaction in a commercial setting. This establishes a strong nexus between their ethnicity and the petty occupations many take up while waiting for an opportunity to move towards Europe.

Models based on interaction and occupation are not new, but they have not, to my knowledge, been applied to the Cape Verde case study. John W. Berry (2005) discusses social and psychological acculturation and the different ways in which a group of newcomers negotiate their inclusion according to the nature of the migrant community's relationship with the host community (he calls these 'acculturation strategies') (see also Berry 2010). More recently, Dennis Cordell (2008) discussed the paradoxes of the incorporation of Nigerians in the United States, resorting to a list of descriptors that include status, education, income and employment as relevant in the process of social exclusion.

While Berry selects a vocabulary related to 'acculturation stress', Alejandro Portes (1995: 1–39) refers to categories of 'hostile', 'non-hostile' and 'poorly integrated' interaction. Tony Richmond (1994: 117–20) attempts a similar diagram of incorporation in his book *Global Apartheid,* proposing an operational
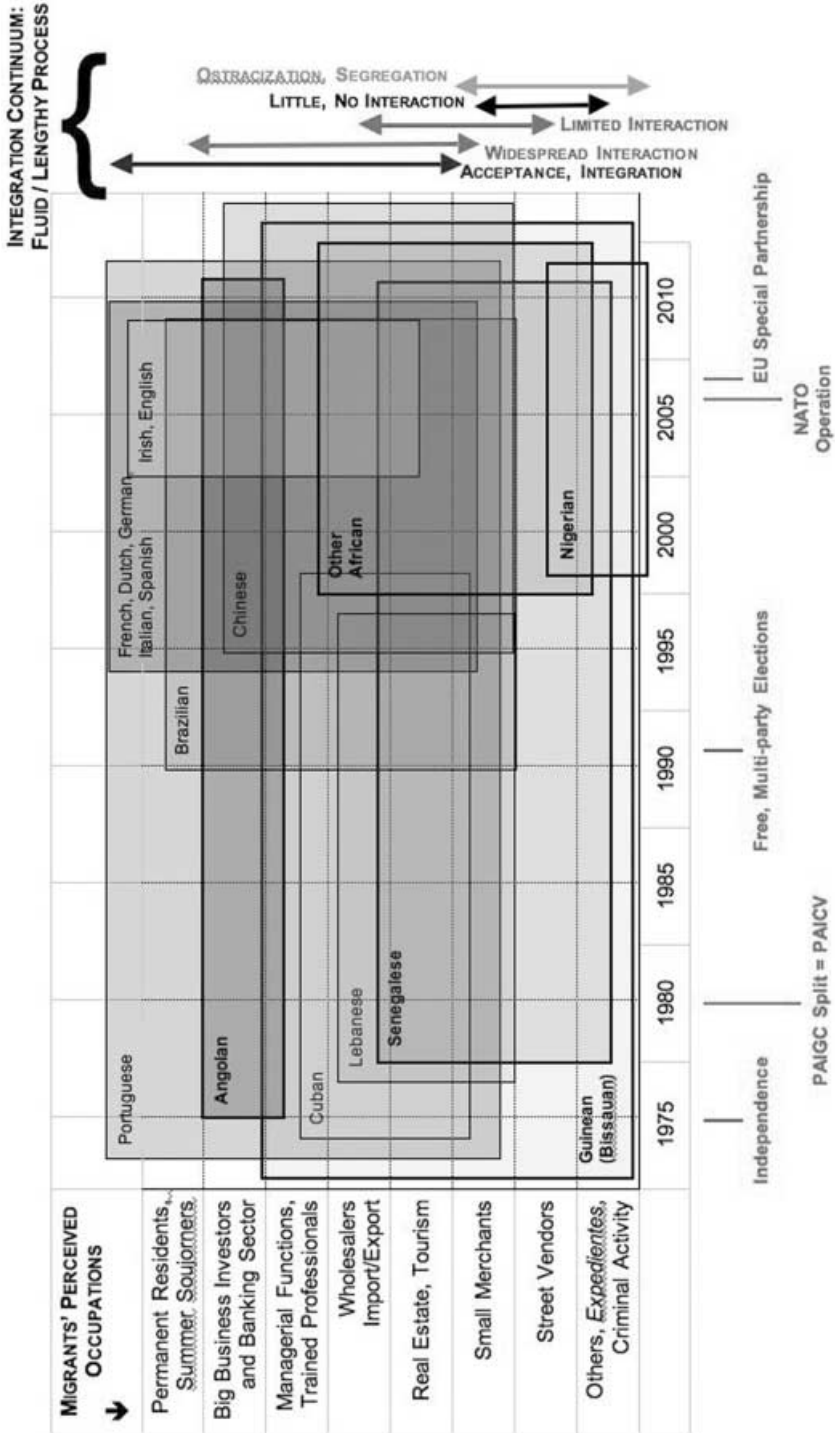
Figure 6.2. Tentative inclusion/exclusion model: (1) perceived professional activity, ethnicity and class; (2) level of integration in host society.

model of migration and occupational status. This builds on John Porter's (1965: 68–91) earlier work on immigrants in post-World War II Canada, where he proposed the categories of 'behavioural assimilation' and 'structural assimilation', speaking of a correlation between ethnicity, entrance status, occupational roles and segregation. The present model instead puts forward a tentative vocabulary that might be more suitable to the Cape Verdean case: acceptance/integration; widespread interaction; limited interaction; no interaction/ostracism.

In explaining this model, the particular case of Nigerians requires special mention. While most African migrants are subject to overt or covert discrimination in some fashion, public opinion on the subject appears to be disproportionally negative towards Nigerian nationals. Not only did this initial study find an abnormal reaction to the presence of Nigerians, their perceived dishonesty and their insinuated lack of a moral compass (Nigerians are often referred to as 'traffickers', 'smugglers' and 'criminals', as happens in much of Africa), but it also worryingly confirmed the findings of broader studies about Nigerian immigrant communities in both South Africa and the United States (Cordell 2008). Public perception thus currently appears to place Nigerians at the bottom of the migrant hierarchy.

Senegal is the closest continental neighbour, and Guinea-Bissau an old political ally in the independence struggle, so unsurprisingly Senegalese and Bissauans are by far the largest foreign communities currently present in the country.[7] Although the phrases *those Senegalese* and *those Mandjako*(*s*)[8] are occasionally used pejoratively to refer to Africans in general – including Senegalese and Bissauans – a special acceptance seems to be reserved for these two national groups, particularly when compared to others, especially Nigerians. The following abundantly demonstrate this:

> We don't get much with Nigerians in our land. They do not work and only bring trouble. We should definitely revise the [protocol for the] free movement of people within ECOWAS. The best would be to sign a protocol with Guinea Bissau and Senegal, with whom we have a common past, and get rid of those Nigerians.[9]

> Fifteen out of ten Nigerians living here are traffickers. We usually generalize and call the continental migrants Mandjakos, but the truth is that those Nigerians have nothing to do with the Bissauans or even the Senegalese. Those coming from Nigeria are here with the express intent of developing the powerful Nigerian mafia.[10]

> A woman from Mali, a man from Nigeria, others from Ghana, and elsewhere in ECOWAS, are caught every day in Cape Verde and taken to court for criminal acts. Is it not time to opt out of that treaty and forbid the entrance of these Muslim, criminal strangers…?[11]

If Nigerians [denounce criminal elements within their national community] they will all end up in jail. Amokaki denounces Ammuneke, Ammuneke denounces Yekkiki, Yekkiki denounces Amokaki and so on. We would need a (really) big jail for Nigerians alone.[12]

Interestingly, Senegalese interviewees in the streets of Praia and Mindelo cautiously detached themselves from Nigerian migrants in their own statements, claiming that they 'look for confusion' and thus Senegalese must not be seen as socializing with them. When asked about criminality among the African community, a male Senegalese interviewee in Mindelo vehemently stated that 'Senegalese are different from Nigerians', making sure this separation was clear to the author/interviewer.

It is difficult to speculate on the reasons for these and many similar comments. Regional grievances, such as Nigeria's size, affluence and political and economic dominance in Upper Guinea, as well as its proactive intervention in political affairs across the region, could perhaps explain some suspiciousness towards Nigerian nationals, transplanted to a new geography. Yet the scope of these comments suggests that Senegalese either genuinely assume that Nigerians in Cape Verde are involved in informal and illegal activities, or simply that they understand and have appropriated the mistrust for Nigerians among Cape Verdeans. If the latter is true, then this eagerness to adapt and conform to the host society's rules would appear to be happening in the interest of self-preservation. I suggest both aspects, and possibly more, play a role.

Assembling a collection of ideas that capture common perceptions of and suspicions about continental African migrants in Cape Verde becomes a revealing exercise, once underlying assumptions have been teased out. Three key issues stood out in interviews with Cape Verdeans on possible reasons for these negative perceptions: language barriers, extreme cultural differences and the vast increase in urban criminality (particularly in Praia and Mindelo but also, as noted before, in Boa Vista). These arguments can be deconstructed fairly simply. First, although language is factually a communication barrier with some Africans, many urban Cape Verdeans speak enough French or English to ensure that minimal exchanges happen. Moreover, the fact that a migrant learns the language of the host does not automatically open the door to integration. Second, many cultural traits are indeed profoundly different – despite the proximity, they are mostly new to a majority of Cape Verdeans, which could explain a skewed perception based on lack of contact and knowledge. Finally, although criminality rates are certainly rapidly increasing, there seems to be little to no correlation between crime and foreign population. Still, whenever the media run a story on a drug bust involving an African, the discourse on online comment boards quickly veers towards the xenophobic, often ignoring the case at hand and generalizing to other cases and the African community at large.

Some Cape Verdeans, however, have started to react against this situation, broadening the debate on identity, pan-Africanism, immigration and criminality, as the following statements show:

> Foreigners in Cape Verde must be counted … identified [and] remain in Cape Verde following the approval of immigration authorities. … If we start marginalizing foreign residents like this, we will aggravate the situation.[13]

> It's high time Cape Verdean people stopped with these racist comments. Those of us who live abroad feel discrimination in our skin, [but] I am proud of my colour. This is what is happening to our African brothers in Cape Verde. … Why would a people who suffered and suffers so much discrimination discriminate against its own brothers?[14]

> What's this [behaviour] all about? Why assume that every Nigerian is a trafficker? We should not be closing our eyes to what is in front of us: we have youth delinquents that need to be punished. Let's not pretend it's not there just because the victim is Nigerian and the perpetrator Cape Verdean.[15]

These statements in online comment boards were, with few exceptions, matched by statements heard in interviews in several cities in Cape Verde, particularly among younger citizens. Older Cape Verdeans seemed less inclined to support the presence of continental African immigrants, but this study was not broad enough to extrapolate to the generality of the national population. It is likely, I argue, that the dominant, agglutinating nature of a Creole culture that has assimilated and synthesized others in the past simply met, in Upper Guinea Africans, an obstacle that it cannot quite cope with or process in the way it was used to doing. Lacking recent experience in dealing with large migrant groups from Africa, it is possible that Cape Verdeans are simply at a loss. Perhaps time will settle the dust – or perhaps not.

Conclusions

Cape Verde's identity and sovereignty challenges are currently introducing a unique precedent in its history. Social issues resulting from irregular immigration and the pressure of being at the forefront of the 'new' European border reflect symptoms parallel to those in southern European countries in the context of similar transformations in the 1970s and 1980s. This chapter concludes that the increasingly extemporaneous nature of European external policy not only constitutes a reassembly and reconstruction of the whole Mediterranean region, technically testing the extension of its borders towards the western edge of the

African continent, but is also simultaneously transferring many of the political predicaments and social disturbances of the borderland to buffer countries such as Cape Verde.

In assigning the security of its own territorial waters to foreign powers, Cape Verde is complying with a foreign immigration policy in which it has no say. However, it is also, perhaps strategically, ensuring a direct line of contact with EU. Given that it has been involuntarily transformed into a buffer zone, one could also cynically suggest that local authorities might take a veiled interest in maintaining a semi-continuous stream of migrants, a sine qua non condition to guaranteeing the continuation and reinforcement of its close connection and indispensability to the EU, particularly its southern states. At a time of substantial difficulties with border and visa control enforcements, it remains unknown what the future of Cape Verde's engagement with ECOWAS and the EU will be, and how will the two interact. Geopolitically, the West African coast between Morocco and the Cape Verde islands might now be understood as en extension of the Mediterranean Sea directly under the EU's sphere of influence. Cape Verde's recently announced state-of-the-art radar system, financed by Spain and geographically oriented to protect its interests, seems to suggest as much.

A crucial need, however, subsists: regularizing and integrating resident migrants is an urgent matter requiring policymaking that tackles questions of inclusion and exclusion as well as social issues exported by Europe's external policy and proxy maritime borderland in Cape Verdean waters. Internally, the problem lies in maintaining social peace at a time when the country has started to feel the pinch of fast economic development unaccompanied by a gradual shoring up of social democracy.

The ongoing ghettoization of continental African migrancy in Cape Verde, as exemplified by the shantytown of Barraca, follows multiple processes of gentrification, differentiation and exclusion that constrain individuals' mental transition from self-declared 'understanding' to 'tolerance' or 'acceptance'.[16] Pinpointing where Cape Verdeans' feelings about immigration truly lie is a challenge, without a wide-scope opinion survey. Still, the available data might permit one to conjecture, after Arjun Appadurai, that the answer might lie somewhere between the two linked co-factors of globalization and extreme resentment of minorities. I argue that two fears might join this line of thought within a common nexus: the fear of *dilution of identity,* and the fear of *socioeconomic subalternization and loss.*

Appadurai (2006: 83) notes that 'majorities can always be mobilized to think that they are in danger of becoming *minor* (culturally or numerically) and to fear that minorities, conversely, can easily become major.' The fear of dilution of identity illustrated by this statement is perhaps equally compounded by current events across Europe and on Cape Verde's own shores, where the occasional boatload of undocumented migrants moors, building on ideas of 'invasion by boat'. At the other end of the spectrum, and consistent with Appadurai's thought

that 'globalization intensifies the possibility of this volatile morphing' (Appadurai 2006: 83), the fear of socioeconomic loss is clearly intersected by multiple variables, namely the growing difficulty of emigrating *from* Cape Verde, associated with the global economic crisis and the general aggravation of the cost of living in the country. Appadurai perhaps captures it best when he implies that the root of the tension 'has much to do with the strange inner reciprocity of the categories of "majority" and "minority" in liberal social thought, which produces what Appadurai (2006: 8) calls the *anxiety of incompleteness.*

Perhaps there is, then, an ongoing dialogue between sociocultural and socioeconomic factors, although the threat of raw xenophobia and possibly even discrimination based on ethno-racial identities cannot be discounted as contributors to this debate.[17] Here we are reminded of how the overall fabric of a society suffers long-term effects from a type of colonialism that Ashis Nandy has claimed colonizes the mind (Nandy 2006: xi), as well as spatiality, discrimination and structures of inequality, through forms of segregation. The Nigerian scholar Claude Aké notes that 'it is one of the problems of the state-building project in multinational societies of Africa that in seeking to integrate it has instead produced disintegration' by creating a 'multiplicity of interpretative communities which, despite their subordination to central power, remain sharply and consciously differentiated by their cognitive maps, political practice and political morality' (Aké 1995: 72).

In this manner, arguably, the ghettos described earlier become as normalized as they are feared. The ghetto, wrote Albert Memmi (2006: 84), 'is both a rejection and a reaction to rejections, real or imagined, by the others. [It] supports and feeds the separation, but it is also its expression'. In extreme cases, fear might give way to the infamous suggestion that a form of segregation should be safeguarded. This is perhaps the case with the recently circulated idea that the shantytown of Barraca in Boa Vista ought to be fenced off – allegedly following suggestions by the residents themselves (see e.g. Frederico 2008).

Considering these acute tensions, the fast-changing ethnoscape of the country probably justifies more aggressive measures to strengthen social justice. It also requires that the official approach to immigration move forward from its current single focus on Cape Verdeans living overseas to proactively develop a comprehensive and sovereign immigration policy. What the current context does not justify, however, are the exaggerated discourses of 'invasion', criminality and dilution of identity advanced by the media, articulated even by influential political and academic figures, and reproduced by many ordinary Cape Verdeans. This discourse currently seems to apply exclusively to African migrants (Angolans excepted), while Chinese, Europeans and even Brazilians are all generally seen as bringing technical and economic advantages to the country. This murky cocktail of ethno-racial and socioeconomic reasons suggests a hybrid type of discrimination that, being thus far unaddressed by the Cape Verdean government, is easily

finding resonance among Cape Verdean people based on the 'fear of invasion'. Appadurai (2006) dubs this 'the fear of small numbers' – the majority's irrational fear of becoming subjugated by a diminutive minority.

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Notes

1. This contribution is based on a paper presented at the Upper Guinea Conference, Max Planck Institute for Social Anthropology, in Halle, Germany. As of 2010 the Cape Verdean government has – predictably – rethought the immigration, resettlement and free movement of people clauses in the guiding ECOWAS agreements, and eschewed the possibility of integrating the advance group of countries using the new ECOWAS biometric passports (backed by Ghana and set to gradually replace individual member states' national passports). Interestingly, this policy-based distancing happened despite the current government's pan-African stance and its continued involvement in regional politics (as epitomized by President Pedro Pires' intervention in the Côte d'Ivoire crisis in late 2010).

2. The subject of an idealized racial blindness in the Cape Verde islands has been explored in Deirdre Meintel's (1984) work. She previously touched upon the subject in earlier works, including Meintel Machado (1981).

3. For a full set of studies on motivations for migration, refer to the joint project *EUMAGINE: Imagining Europe from the Outside,* run by the Centre of Sociological Research (CSR) in Ternopil, Ukraine; the Centre for Migration, Policy and Society (COMPAS) and the International Migration Institute (IMI), both in Oxford, United Kingdom; the Peace Research Institute Oslo (PRIO) in Norway; Koç University in Istanbul, Turkey; Université Checikh Anta Diop de Dakar (UCAD) in Senegal; Université Mohammed V-Agdal in Rabat, Morocco; and the Centre for Migration and Intercultural Studies (CeMIS) in Antwerp, Belgium. Also see www.eumagine.org.

4. It should be noted that Cape Verde's immigration law was finally passed in 2012, as was a national strategy on migration. These have established themselves as core documents among a portfolio that includes limited mobility treatises with both the EU and ECOWAS. The category of asylum continues to be unregulated by internal laws. No refugees are registered as such in official national statistics, although the country has on occasion agreed to receive individuals with sensitive politics (i.e. people accused of Basque

terrorism and former Guantanamo prisoners), in ad hoc negotiations. Temporary (or circular) migration of West Africans is theoretically possible in light of the ECOWAS agreements, and business/investment travel or migration is facilitated by specific regulations. For lower-income migrants, opportunities to enter the country legally are scarce.

5. For a complete discussion of the ethnic and racial dimensions of migration in Cape Verde, see especially Marcelino (2013).

6. The country's first five-star hotel, a 750-room mammoth, opened on the island in January 2011.

7. Independence leader Amílcar Cabral was a Bissau-Guinean of Cape Verdean stock.

8. Referred to indistinctively of the specificity of this mainland ethnic group.

9. Reader comment (Acut) published in an online forum following the publication of an article about two Nigerian citizens detained in Sal Island for dealing crack (1 April 2009), in *A Semana Online* (www.asemana.publ.cv).

10. Reader comment (Mandjako Criolo), in *A Semana Online*, 01 April 2009.

11. Reader comment (Miss Universo), published in an online forum following the publication of an article about a Malian woman apprehended while trafficking cocaine (26 February 2010), in *A Semana Online*.

12. Reader comment (CEDEAonde, or roughly 'ECOwhat'), published in an online forum following the publication of an article on the arrest and trial in the Sal of the Nigerian national Onochie Francis Obaziek for drug traffic (10 March 2010), in *A Semana Online*.

13. Reader comment (Pedro António), published in an online forum, following the publication of an article about two Nigerian citizens detained in Sal Island for dealing crack (1 April 2009). It is worth noting that all the positive comments are signed by readers identified with a full name, rather than the anonymous, sheltering nickname that is generally the case with negative comments.

14. Reader comment (Madil), published in an online forum, following the publication of an article on a robbery in Sal (19 February 2010), in *A Semana Online*.

15. Reader comment (Aramis), in *A Semana Online*.

16. Though clearly not a feature unique to Cape Verde, this is as relevant as it is prolific. For other cases, see e.g. Min Sook Lee's film *El Contrato* (www.nfb.ca/film/el_contrato), a 2003 short documentary on Mexican contract workers in Canada, where southern Ontario employers and residents employ similarly suggestive vocabulary, such as: 'I understand … but,' or 'I know they're human too, and I'm not racist or anything, but…'.

17. Ultimately, such 'colonial racism' could be a sad remnant of Cape Verde's past and its very prominent postcolonial present, as Franz Fanon (2006) implied about the typical post-colony, albeit in another geographical context that nonetheless shares the postcolonial creolized subject with Cape Verde. On the issue of migrant 'invasion' or 'flood', see De Haas (2008).

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Celebrating Asymmetries

Creole Stratification and the Regrounding of Home in Cape Verdean Migrant Return Visits

Heike Drotbohm

Introduction

Hora di Bai	*Time of Departure*
Se bem é doce,	If return is sweet
Bai é maguado;	departure is bitter
Mas, se ka bado,	but, who does not leave
Ka ta birado!	cannot return
Se no morrê na despedida,	if we die in the moment of goodbye
Nhor des na volta	at the moment of our return
Ta dano bida.	god will revive us.

—Eugenio Tavares[1]

This chapter deals with the ritualized event of return migration in the West African island state of Cape Verde. Once a central node of transatlantic exchange and connectedness, this country has over time drifted to the margins of global interest, particularly since the abolition of slavery. As in many other places that had been part of these transatlantic entanglements, this historical change resulted in the symbolic revaluation of return migration and in a fusion of mobility, identity and the status of a person. As is told in the Cape Verdean *morna*[2] quoted above, only those who left can return and therewith become fully accepted members of this transnational society.

Despite the heterogeneity of the return migrants of the twenty-first century, who return to their country of origin as tourists, successful investors, relaxed pensioners, disillusioned migrants or deportees, *os retornados,* as the returnees are called, by and large enjoy a good reputation. As will become clear in the fol-

lowing, in countries considerably shaped by a transnational livelihood, different types of diasporic return reveal various political, economic, symbolic and social motives. Above all, recent shifts in the global economy have caused an increase in return migration, and its impact has become highly visible in the countries most involved in international migration. Accordingly, remigration has received more and more scholarly attention (Duval 2004; Markowitz and Stefansson 2004; Conway 2005; Harper 2005; Tsuda 2009). Whereas these studies mainly deal with the social background and conditions of return migration, understood as voluntary and complete, this essay examines the ritualized event of migrant return visits and those encounters between visiting migrants and the nonmigrant island population.

In the following discussion I employ the concept of 'home' as an entry into the nexus between different kinds of belonging, using it to frame the dynamics of social relations, identity and locality. I base my interpretation of return visits on the theoretical premise that 'home' is at once an idea and a social construction as well as a place. Seen this way, 'home' builds on experiences of social continuity and solidarity but also implies processes of differentiation, inequality and enforcement. In this regard I refer to the theoretical framework developed by Sara Ahmed and her colleagues in the introduction to their book *Uprootings/ Regroundings: Questions of Home and Migration*:

> Uprootings and regroundings emerge from this collective work as simultaneously affective, embodied, cultural and political processes whose effects are not simply given. For example, regroundings – of identity, culture, nation, diaspora – can both resist and reproduce hegemonic forms of home and belonging. (Ahmed et al. 2003: 2)

I intend to show that this labour of 'regrounding home' is not only a diasporic project but also involves those who have never left Cape Verde yet nonetheless contribute in their own way to the meaning and reconstruction of 'home'. I will examine this hypothesis by focusing on a particular kind of migrant return, that is, those returns prompted by patron saint festivities, which annually bring thousands of migrants to their country of origin. Despite the fact that this particular type of Cape Verdean return visit constitutes a crucial link within the transnational field connecting the local peasant community to life in different sites of the Cape Verdean diaspora, its content and meaning have not received sufficient scholarly attention.[3] Here the banderona da Campanas de Baixo (hereafter *banderona*), a festivity carried out every year in the rural north of the Cape Verdean island of Fogo, will be analysed with respect to the interaction between groups of people who consider themselves part of the same social structure but live in different places around the world and thus must negotiate different interests, roles and positions.

My observations are based on twelve months of anthropological fieldwork, carried out between 2006 and 2008 on the islands of Fogo and Brava and in Boston, Massachusetts and in Lisbon, Portugal. This fieldwork was conducted as part of a larger research project examining the quality of transnational family relations. In addition to conventional techniques of qualitative social research and network analysis, the integration of my own family life into the local community of Sao Filipe, interviews in transnational households, and visits to the other islands and to family members living in the diaspora were key to understanding divergent perspectives. To examine the social meaning of the *banderona* in this context, in 2007 I participated in the course of events related to the *banderona* in the village of Campanas, which is part of the *Concelo Galineiro* in the north of Fogo. I further grounded my observations through a subsequent stay in the same village.

Mobility, Return and Social Stratification in Cape Verdean History

The two islands of Fogo and Brava lie at the south-western tip of the Cape Verdean archipelago and belong to the group referred to as the Sotavento ('under the wind'). With the larger neighbouring island of Santiago they are part of the so-called 'plantation complex' (Curtin 1990) that in the course of Portuguese colonialism introduced a creole society on these nine formerly uninhabited islands (Carreira 1982). Although the arid climate precluded the establishment of an extensive sugar industry, Cape Verdean ethnogenesis is based on the asymmetric encounter and miscegenation of Portuguese traders and landowners (*morgados*) and Africans deported from the west coast of the continent. In this context Wilson Trajano Filho underlines the crucial significance of the mobility of individual Cape Verdeans, who from the early phase of the archipelago's settlement served to overcome challenges such as resource scarcity and political conflicts (Trajano Filho 2009: 524). Those individuals were responsible for integrating themselves as *lançados* (literally the thrown-out ones) into transatlantic trading networks and eventually gained economic capital, prestige and influence through trafficking in slaves, salt, rice, textiles and European-manufactured objects (Meintel 1984; Rodrigues 2003). As in other parts of the Senegambia, there gradually developed a creole social structure that even today is based on a discursive perception of 'race' and class as key markers of social differentiation.

By the end of the eighteenth century life on the islands, shaped by increasing overpopulation, supply crises and devastating famines, was managed by combining local subsistence farming and fishing with strategic networking with coastal areas around the Atlantic Rim. More than in other areas of West Africa, national history in Cape Verde is shaped by collective efforts of integration into global labour market networks, much like what occurred in the islands of the Caribbean. In this phase migration became established as a family or household strategy to take advantage of the global inequality of different economic systems. Men in

particular availed themselves of the opportunity to work in European or North American agriculture or industry in order to sustain the family members left behind (Halter 1993; Rodrigues 2008: 354). From the beginning of the 1960s this option also became realistic for women, many of whom found jobs as domestic workers in Europe or the United States (Grassi 2007). Today, the Cape Verdean diaspora,[4] which comprises more than five hundred thousand people (Carling and Åkesson 2009), outnumbers the population remaining in the country of origin, and it seems impossible to find a person in Cape Verde who does not have personal contacts beyond the islands.

However, a closer look at the inner consistency of this society reveals that it is not simply the contact itself, but the type and quality of the contact that factors decisively into the islanders' livelihood. On Fogo and Brava, which due to their altitude receive more rain than the eastern islands and offer comparatively amenable conditions for farming, most households combine gardening and fishing with seasonal wage labour and migrant remittances. Until the beginning of the twentieth century, agriculture had the greater significance for local economies, and patron/client relations between local families were crucial to their position and economic survival. Today alliances between local households are still cultivated – for instance, in the form of foster relations, the daily mobility of children between poorer and wealthier households, or through the exchange of crops or prepared food. Yet it is the intensity of contacts with the diaspora that contributes to the local differentiation between a precarious and a comfortable way of life (Drotbohm 2009).

Although only a minority of the population receives money regularly, even intermittent amounts contribute to a higher quality of life, as they are used for irregular expenses that the poorer segments of society in particular can hardly afford otherwise (Åkesson 2009). Due to this established effect of the diaspora on local living conditions, social stratification is shaped not only by the common patterns of creoleness but also by the dynamics and the transnationalization of social inequalities, which develop between those who are actively integrated into transnational networks and those whose connections are fragile.

As in many other regions shaped by transnational migration, return visits are an important means of articulating or strengthening the liveliness of social relations that transgress national boundaries. In addition to spiritual or religious rituals, life-cycle rituals such as baptism, marriage and funerals offer welcome occasions to reconfirm familial solidarity and reorder social belonging, which has been transformed due to great spatial and temporal distances (Fog Olwig 2002; Gardner and Grillo 2002; Drotbohm 2010). Transnational studies on the meaning of return visits have mainly concentrated on the migrants while largely ignoring the interests of the communities of origin. In adopting a transnational perspective to understand social encounters in the context of the patron saint festivities, it seems appropriate to examine return visits and the joint realization of the *banderona* as

the collective endeavour to reconstruct a 'home'. This endeavour may take on different shapes and meanings for different groups of actors but nonetheless enacts 'the processes, modes and materialities of uprooting and regroundings' (Ahmed et al. 2003: 2). The following sections therefore discuss temporality and processes within transnational social fields that not only recall social relations as they were (before departure) but revive the present (in the moment of the actual encounter) and try to envision a future that may still prove valuable for those involved.

Cartographies of Social and Mobile Differences

In this examination of patron saint festivities, the construction of two social groups – 'migrants' and 'nonmigrant islanders' – will be contrasted. This simplifying classification refers to the 'strategic essentialism', as described by Gayatri Spivak[5] for capturing the manoeuvring of actors who make strategic use of essentializing categories in moments of social differentiation. However, this does not intend to suggest that these categories reflect fixed and clear-cut social formations. Many individuals belonging to this transnational social field would not fit clearly into one of these categories: traders and businessmen, for instance, constantly travel but also cultivate a permanent presence on the islands. Pensioners are another example: because the right to re-entry is often linked to the length of stay abroad, some of them have lost their right to circular migration, but despite these mobility restrictions they still identify themselves as migrants. The two groups – 'migrants' and 'nonmigrants' – should rather be viewed as 'social constructions and moral imaginations' (Malkki 1996: 382) produced by social encounters with mobility.

In addition to this heterogeneity, migrants also belong to different professional and status groups and foster different kinds of attachments to their country of origin or to the diaspora. While some visitors return to the islands to strengthen their social bonds, update their knowledge and identify changes in the lives of their relatives, others see their stay on the islands as a kind of vacation, expressing the desire to relax at a distance from the everyday stresses of their diasporic existence and instead enjoy their diasporic achievements. Return visits also can be part of an 'ethnic' marriage market, inviting migrants to return and connect to those who intend to migrate but have not yet succeeded in doing so. Especially visitors who belong to the so-called second or third generation of Cape Verdean migrants living in the diaspora may use the occasion of a return journey to their parents' or grandparents' home country to acquaint or reacquaint themselves with it, improve their Cape Verdean creole, and simply enjoy days at the beach. According to Loretta Baldassar, members of the following generations often reorient themselves towards their migrant parents' culture of origin in order to understand their own cultural and social background as territorially bounded. In these moments of return migration, a village can become a key place of cultural identity (Baldassar 2001).

Not all migrants return though. Some migrants have no interest in getting involved in their country of origin, perhaps even viewing any social ties to relatives who stayed behind as burdensome. Others cannot return; they may lack the financial wherewithal to do so, be unable to travel long distances, or have an undocumented residence status in the diaspora. Due to this heterogeneity, a return visit is always both an expression of capabilities and the result of individual decision making. Hence, both migrants and nonmigrants often perceive return visits as illuminating the intensity of migrant solidarities and the quality of their ties to the country of origin.

Re-membering Those Abroad

In current times the realization and performance of the *banderona* cannot be imagined without the involvement of the diaspora. It follows a 'transnational division of ritual space' (Salih 2002), connecting persons from both sides of the Atlantic who contribute to the preparation of the celebration. To understand the inner workings of this transnational ritual, one first needs to know that being the *festeiro,* the *banderona*'s main sponsor, is perceived and expressed as an important privilege. Though a local festivities committee composed exclusively of nonmigrants chooses and announces the *festeiro* for the coming year at the end of the preceding *banderona,* over the last twenty years the position of *festeiro* has been delegated solely to migrants, and not, as one might expect, to wealthy locals. As a rule, requests from *migrantes* and their kin who have a legitimate interest in carrying out the *banderona* are sufficient. That said, the honour cannot be given to just anybody – a *festeiro* or his family is supposed to have descended from the village of Campanas and must also have the financial resources to carry out the festivities appropriately. Disagreements usually arise during this selection, revolving around which family the next sponsor should belong to or whether the family relations between the candidate and the locality are considered acceptably close.

The *festeiro* of 2007 received the honour of 'taking the flag' after his name was submitted for the third time. He had strengthened his chances by way of friendly visits to Campanas, his active participation in the festivities over three consecutive years and his ability to mobilize generous sums. The islanders are well aware that migrants have a strong interest in the position of the *festeiro.* Each year the local committee must assess who has a legitimate interest in the position and who articulates this interest the most effectively. As in the case of the *festeiro* of 2007, rejecting an aspirant's request in one year does not preclude the same aspirant in subsequent years; rather, the rejected aspirant often intensifies his efforts by increasing his visits, collecting higher donation amounts and expanding his level of social networking. With regard to financial expectations, the honour of *festeiro* goes hand in hand with the duty, while away from the islands, to organize several fundraising activities during the preparatory year, such as a *tombola* and several

sponsor dinners, with the aim of mobilizing additional sponsors and obtaining larger sums to send to Cape Verde.[6]

One may wonder at this point why migrants are willing to shoulder the costs, burdens and responsibilities of the *banderona.* Many Cape Verdean migrants, for different reasons, value the festivities as an occasion for a return visit, yet many hesitate to become the *festeiro* due to the enormous financial and organizational demands. However, when analysing this kind of prestige or merit festivity, one should not focus solely on the organizing participants. A closer look reveals that not only the returnees but also the island population articulate a clear interest and exert discernible pressure on their diasporic kin to carry out the *banderona.* Being related to a future *festeiro* first of all alters the local position of the family to which the *festeiro* is connected, since the organization of the *banderona* is done on a family basis. In the course of the preparatory year, the *festeiro* remains in continuous contact with the committee as well as with his kin living on the island, who regularly are informed of the amount of money raised and are consulted about the allocation of these sums. At the same time, the *festeiro*'s kin on the island are in charge of collecting money and food donations, planning and coordinating the preparation of the dishes, and deciding on the working groups (cooks, assistants, etc.) who will produce the feast.

In this preparatory phase it becomes obvious that the *banderona,* like similar celebrations in Latin American peasant communities, constitutes an important element in the design and confirmation of local structures of solidarity and cooperation. Lynn Walter (1981), for instance, describes an equivalent procedure in Ecuador and illustrates the generalized reciprocity as it plays out over the course of the festivities, which can result in relations of cooperation but also exacerbate social hierarchies. Similarly, in Cape Verde the position of those households in close contact with the *festeiro* is heightened. Their members serve as local key persons and enjoy the privilege of deciding upon and distributing different functions and resources, which are also viewed as income-generating activities. Hence, those involved in the *banderona*'s execution foster local alliances that will be to their continued advantage beyond the event itself, for instance in the context of local politics or when hiring local labour forces. Comparable to the *tabanca,* a semireligious network of solidarity on the neighbouring island of Santiago (Trajano Filho 2009: 528), the *banderona* helps to lay the foundation for a cooperative structure that prescribes solidarity and support not only during labour-intensive periods of agriculture but also during life crises, such as diseases or funerals, as well as on such occasions as weddings or the construction of a house.

As the days of the *banderona* approach, charter flights and boats arrive from Lisbon, Porto, Paris, Rotterdam, Hamburg and Boston. In this way the festivities bring together Cape Verdeans from across the Cape Verdean diaspora, therefore constituting an occasion to meet not only relatives and friends living on the islands but also those living in other countries. For some migrants this is a

convenient alternative to making visits to several different countries to meet relatives living in other world areas, whereas others, due to financial, political or visa constraints, lack access to the other countries and thus depend on such events in Cape Verde.

In these moments of arrival, it becomes clear that besides responding to 'local' interests, as described above, the *banderona* also serves as an occasion for fostering transnational social relations. The island population makes efforts to host as many visitors as possible, who arrive from neighbouring islands as well as foreign countries. Hosting guests from abroad is seen as an opportunity to foster or initiate social contacts, and hence becomes part of the flow of people, goods and information that connects the island with the rest of the archipelago and its surrounding world. Since these interests usually are communicated efficiently, visitors arriving from the diaspora are expected to bear the considerable cost of additional baggage in order to provide gifts such as clothes, table and bed linens, and whatever else is necessary to ensure their family and friends are well equipped during the feast days. Consequently, before and during the festivities, it is not only the migrants who stand out from the local island population – the people related to migrants likewise set themselves apart by means of their newly received trendy clothes and jewellery. The younger generation in particular appreciates this practice: several times a day they return jointly to their houses, critically examining the new clothes, shoes and shawls before returning to the festival. Later, as they stroll through Campana's small streets wearing their new attire, the visualization and ostentatious display of material abundance highlights the differences between those households that host friends and relatives during the festival days and those that lack any connection to the diaspora. These differences exist throughout the year, but they become particularly obvious during the time of the festivities.

Negotiating Creole Asymmetries and Status Positions

In Campanas the three main days of the *banderona* are the festive highlight of the year. Just as on the other islands – where patron saint festivities are by contrast much more commercialized and more strongly shaped by political party affiliation and connected to the international Cape Verdean music scene[7] – a typically quiet village is transformed for a few days into a noisy party affair. The quality of the party is measured by the influx of visitors, the head count of slaughtered animals, the number of pots filled with traditional Cape Verdean food, the quantities of donated alcohol, and the size and beauty of São João Baptista's altar.

The ritual chronology[8] of the *banderona* is already centuries old. It begins with a Catholic mass for the feast's patron saint on Friday evening. While the women pound corn for traditional corn meals such as *xerem, catxupa* and *jagacida* in huge mortars (*pilões*), the *coladeiras*[9] (singers), accompanied by drummers

and young men on wooden hobbyhorses, move processionally back and forth through the village streets, which are lined by hundreds of spectators and connect the upper and lower parts of the village. Their return signals the start of one of the festival high points – the ritual slaughter of several bullocks, goats, pigs and poultry amid the shouts of spectators and the songs of the *coladeiras*. Another key event of the day is the appearance of masked thieves who show up, snatch a huge portion of meat and disappear before being caught by the youth and carried back to the village. At the end of the feast the *bandeira*, the feast's flag, is blessed by the local priest and run up the feast's pole (Figure 7.1). Together the *kordidjeru* (head of the deciding committee) and the *juiz* (a performer playing the figure of the judge) make the final decision on who will be allowed to take the flag and hence receive the honour of sponsoring the following year's *banderona*. As onlookers applaud, the next *festeiro* grabs the flag and runs jubilantly through the village. Later the flag will be placed on the altar of São João Baptista, where requests by those in need will be made.

An examination of the *banderona*'s historical background reveals continuities as well as transformations in the inherent creole social structure. Félix Monteiro, who studied the *banderona* of the island of Fogo during the 1940s, in his article 'Bandeiras da Ilha do Fogo', subtitled 'o senhor e o escravo divertem-se' ('the master and the slave entertain themselves'), describes the origins of the ritual as

Figure 7.1. A *bandeira,* the feast's flag, is run up the feast's pole. (Photo by Heike Drotbohm, 2007)

an encounter between the white aristocratic upper class and African slaves. After slavery had ended in colonial Cape Verde, the *festeiro,* as the master or sponsor of the feast, likewise fulfilled his obligation to celebrate his wealth, generously distributing it by hosting a costly, lavish festival. As is common in patron/client relationships, the demonstration of wealth and power simultaneously served to reaffirm the loyalty of his subordinates (Monteiro 1958: 10).

Returning migrants, even during the early stages of Cape Verdean colonial history, integrated themselves and their interests into this ritual festivity. In her ethnography on the early, nineteenth-century phase of Cape Verdean transatlantic relations as they extended from the archipelago to North America, Marilyn Halter describes how Cape Verdean men worked in New England's cranberry bogs and returned annually during the break in the growing season. Throughout the weeks of their stay, their homecoming was celebrated in a prodigal manner. Baptisms and marriages were arranged, and the local patron saint was ritually thanked for their safe journeys (Halter 1993).

These historical shifts reveal that over time, different actors have used the *banderona* to revive the foundation of a (post)colonial nation. As the result of a historical dynamic between mobility and sedentariness, the festivities are occasions for contemporary islanders and migrants to remind each other of their social positions, rights and duties. Certain roles are still celebrated in the festive moments in order to play out the historically grounded creole stratification on stage: positions such as master, judge, horseman, singer and thief are revived in a performative manner. Thus the participants demonstrate that belonging to a certain social class, imagined in relation to variants of mobility, is the key marker of social difference. This needs to be seen as opposed to the mixing of cultures of origin, that is, a creole mode of imagining cultural encounters, or the ethnic identity that is the main marker in many other West African societies.

This class-related aspect is celebrated vividly during the ritual peak of the festivity, when the local saint, São João Baptista, is worshipped. Many migrants from the island of Fogo retain an intense connection to São João Baptista, who is believed to spread health, strength and success among his adherents. In this moment of worship the *festeiro* and certain others hold small-denomination American currency (one-, five- and ten-dollar bills) high in the air and then, to the cheers of the crowd, deposit them bill by bill on the saint's image (Figure 7.2). The sum collected in this manner is afterwards handed over to the local feast committee.

The spiritual motivations that are apparent at this juncture of the festivities also must be addressed. Far more than the islanders, the migrants use the occasion of the *banderona* to address their personal saint. Many migrants, while in diaspora and particularly in times of crisis or disease, express a *promesa* (a solemn promise) to return to their home country and give thanks to their patron saint in the village of Campanas. They understand *tomar a bandeira* (to take the flag) to be an act of faith and a public affirmation of their affiliation to their 'spiritual

Figure 7.2. *Coladreiras,* drummers and the *festeiro,* donating small-denomination U.S. bills. (Photo by Heike Drotbohm, 2007)

home'. In this context Zlatko Skrbiš asserts that home visits usually interweave secular and spiritual aspects, and that these visits' emotional density makes them comparable to pilgrimages. Drawing from his observations of the Croatian diaspora, he illustrates how the interplay of national and ethnic-diasporic identities creates a feeling of nostalgia directly connected to a certain sacralized place (Skrbiš 2007).

Spiritual and social motives are inextricably connected in this key moment of the ritual worship of São João Baptista. The migrants' placing of dollar bills on the patron saint becomes a significant manifestation of a symbolic exchange whereby money made by those migrants is rechanneled to the locality of origin. Hence, in this ritual the migrants enact their promise to the patron saint as well as their continued commitment to the local community. Additionally, this ostentatious display of the migrants' powerful position serves to demonstrate and affirm the status shift that they achieved in the course of their migration and now uphold through sustained affiliation to their former home country. In particular the sponsors of the *banderona,* who distinguish themselves from the other celebrants by wearing more formal attire, often a suit and tie, are those who provide the larger sums. Often they understand their migration-related successes in the context of a collective life-making and therefore feel a strong obligation to thank, recompense and symbolically redirect their revenues to their localities of origin.

Hence, migrants fulfilling their *promesa* to the patron saint express spiritual and social loyalty with their monetary contribution. One migrant interviewee, a woman in her sixties who returns to Fogo annually, expressed it this way:

> For some it's mainly practical things, they want to thank those who helped to organize the journey, who offered information or things, or housing maybe. For others it's the mental support, not to travel on your own, leaving, but also arriving within a network of people who accompany you in their minds. When we refer to San Jon, this is what we are thankful for.

Several migrants directly attributed their social upward mobility and successful integration into more than one society to the assistance they received from those kin who stayed behind. While some emphasized practical aspects of support in the organization of the journey or the arrival phase, others highlighted the moral backing they experienced at the moment of departure from the islands, which they valued as crucial to their success in the diaspora. Therefore, celebrating with foreign currency (for instance, the U.S. dollars mentioned above) is a way to underscore the relation between the project of migration and their individual gains as well as the formation of new social asymmetries. In these moments, migrants perform as the providers and those living on the islands as the receivers.

Beyond this, the charity expressed in this kind of donation can also be seen in relation to the status claims often articulated by return migrants. Luin Goldring has described the typical need of migrants to display their upward mobility at the moment of return by exhibiting consumer goods. Many migrants eagerly anticipate occasions during which they can transform the investments they have made over the course of migration into social recognition and prestige.

> The community is not only a source, but a key context in which social and money capital can be deployed as status claims, and translated into status through appropriate valorization by a community who speaks the same language of stratification. (Goldring 1997: 184).

This can refer to different types of migrants – not only the successful returnee who wishes to celebrate his gains, but also those who have experienced a loss of social and economic status. Especially in the case of visitors who have not achieved a financially comfortable position in the diaspora but instead must work several jobs to fulfil their duties in both the country of settlement and the country of origin, the ritual moment can be an opportunity for regaining recognition, an example of the 'status paradox of migration' (Nieswand 2011). These returnees, many of whom cannot afford to return to Cape Verde annually, appreciate their participation at the *banderona* as a moment of compensation.

Taking into account the diverse motives and modes of return, it is important to discuss social asymmetries as they are enacted during the days of the *banderona,* since these reveal an important ambivalence in these ludic encounters. The *festeiro* and other main sponsors accept their positions as patrons and are able to celebrate their duties, but not all visitors returning from the diaspora have the means to comfortably contribute so liberally. During their home visits, many migrants are confronted with the obligation to be generous and cover all eventual costs, even beyond the main days of the celebration. The idea that migrants are expected to demonstrate or confirm their status position can result in direct requests by nonmigrants – be they family members, friends or others – who openly ask for or lay claim to gifts in the form of money, clothes or other kinds of support as if it were an assumed and expected exchange.

Especially during the three main days of the *banderona,* migrants can hardly distance themselves from these requests, since the islanders use the festivities as an occasion to remind the migrants of their (actually or allegedly) privileged position. Although most migrants are aware of their particular position and duties and, hence, accept that they are expected to demonstrate generosity, many complain about the blatant manner in which their donor position is assigned. During the few weeks of their home visits, many of them go through their entire savings and leave the islands with empty suitcases, or as one person said, 'half naked'. Otherwise, they have to endure being referred to as 'cheap' (the English term has been absorbed by Cape Verdean creole) or *ingrót* (unworthy).

The above-discussed historical background is relevant to understanding these tensions and their social constellation because it has created a particular moral economy in which relations of dependency between local families and the support of poorer by wealthier ones are common. However, only in certain very poor local households does the material aspect of the festivities and support strategies predominate. In such cases the feast above all serves to tackle these asymmetries, test loyalties and claim solidarities. The moral evaluation of material differences, as it surfaces during the *banderona,* reminds returnees that the success of their migration is based in part on the functioning of their transnational social networks and on the support by those left behind. Therefore many are confronted with obligations of generalized reciprocity, comparable with those linked to the 'moral economies' of peasant societies (Thompson 1963), which they must fulfil during their home visits yet remain unable to dissolve in any final way.

Home as a Contested Resource

The question of why Cape Verdeans living in the diaspora accept the above-ascribed roles has still not been answered completely. Are migrants for the most part satisfied that it has become expected of them to adequately support the kin they have left behind in the islands? Should moments of recognition and the

social compensation of their efforts be considered one of the main motives for a return visit? In addition to the reasons and interests already illuminated, I interpret the acceptance and the endurance of status ascriptions also as articulated claims for social integration and legitimized membership in these transnational social fields under circumstances of rapid economic transformation.

One the one hand, return visits are only temporary stopovers and therefore also only temporary negotiations over the integration and participation of some in the lives of others. On the other hand, however, short visits can also be related to the idea of an eventual final return, which many migrants take into consideration. For instance, a female migrant around sixty years old told me in a spontaneous conversation:

> See, some years ago, we came here for visiting family, for enjoying some nice days, celebrating a big party and our patron, San Jon. Today all this is different. Since our situation in the US became unclear, I try to come more often. Maybe I will live in Fogo, sooner or later, who knows how things will turn out over there [in the US].

I often heard similar comments connecting return visits with the idea of an eventual permanent return. Some migrants who spent their younger years in Cape Verde and left the islands as adults have enjoyed numerous achievements that stabilized and enriched their lives in the diaspora. But many migrants, particularly those who have not obtained U.S. citizenship, still consider conditions abroad to be uncertain and keep open the question of where they will spend their remaining years.

Financial and real estate crises, along with the resultant soaring liabilities, have troubled migrant populations in particular. Pension adjustments also have dampened the outlook on living out one's 'sunset years' in Boston, New York or Lisbon. In some cases, the time limits on green cards and other temporary residence permits make a final return after retirement probable. In addition, undocumented migrants are threatened by the ever present possibility of deportation (Drotbohm 2011). All of these motivations combine to fuel ideas of an eventual permanent return. For these reasons many migrants may feel obliged to keep in touch with and maintain their social presence in their community of origin.

In this light, it becomes obvious that the social act of constituting or reviving 'home' is profoundly shaped by life conditions in other places and is particularly meaningful to those persons and groups who are in a vulnerable position. In a comparable context, Nadje Al-Ali and Khalid Koser state:

> Despite the unsettling of previously rooted and fixed notions of home, people engaged in transnational practices might express an uneasiness, a sense of fragmentation, tension and even pain. Everyday contestations of

> negotiating the gravity of one's home is particularly distressing for those
> who are vulnerable, for example the poor, women, illegal immigrants
> and refugees. (Al-Ali and Koser 2002: 7)

Therefore, many visitors seize the occasion of their visits and their particular position during the *banderona* not just to demonstrate their financial and social superiority, but also to confirm their solidarity and willingness to support the islanders. In this way they control their local visibility, marking their position within these village communities and articulating their claims of social belonging. Simultaneously they examine the conditions for an eventual permanent return.

The island population also surveys these global transformations critically. Against this background they use the *banderona* to display their own particular power by highlighting the conditions of social integration and therefore also those of return. 'Home' in this context appears to be an increasingly contested resource that commemorates the contingencies of a successful life, which refers to more than one place of living but whose achievements remain ephemeral. Both the visitors who envision returning to stay and those who have remained behind and become receivers of transnational support make use of this resource: 'home'. The latter demonstrate that communities of origin set up their own rules of social integration, which go along with high expectations and articulated conditionalities.

Conclusion

Whether viewed as a privilege, emotional need or obligation, return visits constitute an important element in the configuration and design of transatlantic Cape Verdean livelihoods. Especially the contingencies resulting from the most recent phase of globalization, as well as new inequalities that have evolved during this phase, have contributed to the social landscapes and national images in the countries of origin. As the above account illustrates, islanders and migrants alike use the *banderona* to foster their border-crossing networks and raise issues of transnational social asymmetries – not for the purpose of questioning such networks and asymmetries but rather to affirm and conserve them. In this particular case, the historical overview that has been presented contextualizes the origins of the *banderona* in a postslavery and postcolonial society. Accordingly, the contemporary ritual reveals a historically grounded social stratification that is both enacted and celebrated during the festivities.

Notwithstanding the historical particularities of Cape Verde, similar shifts can be observed in other world regions: the former ethos of return, which many migrants cultivate in a nostalgic romanticization of their country of origin, has in recent times yielded to real and sometimes enforced ideas of an eventual permanent return. Against this background the festivities can be understood as a continuing desire to hold on to a 'home' and the regrounding as a particular kind of

cohesion at this particular place. This desire and cohesion inform Cape Verdeans' attempts to adapt to the changing social conditions that arise from the physical, social and at times emotional distance caused by emigration.

Both the social constellations and the tensions that surface in the course of the *banderona* throw light on the challenges of the migrant/nonmigrant dynamic, which may increase in the future. In many countries shaped by a transnational livelihood, the most recent diversification of return migration needs to be considered, as the social differentiation among the actors coexists alongside new hierarchies and dependencies. If the trend of increasingly strict border regimes and rising deportation rates continues even as migrants' exclusion from citizenship rights becomes more common, the so-called 'countries of origin' will soon face new challenges.

Future transnational studies therefore need to answer several questions resulting from these changes. What happens to families that have spread their livelihood and the allocation of tasks and duties across different places and economies, and now, due to such changes, are obliged not only to rejoin their economic forces, but also to do so in the face of a differentiated fabric of values and societal roles? What macroeconomic consequences can be detected in the case of societies that obtain large portions of their GNP via their diasporic affiliations? In cases of the return of poor or forgotten migrants, how will their reintegration take place in societies that in fact rely on the financial support of migrants? Lastly, what consequences do these kinds of conditionalities and transformations have for those in the diaspora who would like to return but cannot, due to their altered circumstances, comply with the expectations of their kin?

Considering these changes it becomes apparent that a return 'home', once valued and praised in many places along the Atlantic Rim, may soon be judged in a more critical manner. In a dramatic change from previous decades, it is no longer predictable whether societies of origin will consider returnees a benefit or an economic burden. Therefore, the question of whether a migrant's return can continue to be regarded as the kind of rebirthing proclaimed in the *morna* that opened this chapter, and furthermore whether such a return will be able to maintain its validity, desirability and congenial acceptance by those who have never left the islands, remains open for future consideration.

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Notes

1. http://www1.umassd.edu/specialprograms/caboverde/etavares.html
2. The *morna* is a Cape Verdean song genre based on melancholic melodies and texts, drawing from the Portuguese *fado* and Brazilian *modinha*. In Cape Verde, the elder generation especially enjoys these laments, which always contain an element of *sodadi* (longing) and *sakrifis* (sacrifice, suffering), and have been taken up by younger generations in the form of more recent music genres. Eugenio Tavares (1867–1930), originally from the island of Brava, is considered the most important composer of the Cape Verdean *morna* (Lobban and Lopes 1995: 55).
3. Félix Monteiro (1958), who published an early article on these festivities on the island of Fogo, did not mention external actors having a particular position within the feast's social structure. In the context of the *tabanca,* semireligious solidarity networks on the Cape Verdean island of Santiago, comparable patron saint festivities are important because they include the possibility of uniting persons involved in the network once a year (Semedo and Turano n.d.; Trajano Filho 2009: 528).
4. Each of the nine inhabited Cape Verdean islands has a tendency towards specific migration destinations that is the result of historical migration patterns. For instance, the two eastern islands of Sal and Boa Vista have huge diaspora populations in Italy, while Sao Vicente, one of the northern islands, has a sizable migrant population in England and the Netherlands (Carling 2001: 7). In the United States, larger Cape Verdean migrant communities can be found in the areas of Boston, Brockton and Long Island (Meintel 1984; Halter 1993).
5. For a summary of 'strategic essentialism' see Morton (2007: 126).
6. During such dinners, sympathizers and sponsors are invited to contribute to the project by means of either fixed or voluntary amounts (usually USD 40–100). According to the main sponsor of the *banderona* in 2007, each of the sponsoring events raised a sum of approximately USD 2,000–3,000.
7. For the *festa do primeiro de Maio* in the town of Sao Filipe, or for the Cola San Jon on the neighbour island of Brava in mid June, thousands of migrants return each year via chartered flights and boats from different places of the Cape Verdean diaspora. Unlike the *banderona* de Campanas de Baixo, these festivals charge visitors an entry fee and host beauty competitions, cockfights, horse races and soccer matches.
8. The three main days of the *banderona* take place on the last weekend before Carnival.
9. Like the *morna,* the *coladeira* is a music or song genre associated with a certain rhythm and dancing style.

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Part III

Travelling Models

Chapter 8

Travelling Terms

Analysis of Semantic Fluctuations in the Atlantic World

Wilson Trajano Filho

In this chapter I examine how systematic intersocietal encounters set cultural elements in motion across time and space, generating semantic instabilities that affect the meanings of things and ideas in a nonrandom way. My attention will be directed to the connections (and the turbulences they bring about) between the ecumenes that arose from processes of cultural creolization along the Upper Guinea Coast before the arrival of Europeans in the fifteenth century; the Luso-African ecumene that developed in this portion of the African coast and the adjacent islands of Cape Verde; and the Caribbean ecumene, also the product of a long process of creolization involving Europeans of different nationalities and Africans of various cultural and social provenance. I take each of these ecumenes as a vast field of communication that provides actors with means to develop a sense of difference as well as a loosely disseminated feeling of sharing symbolic forms and social institutions.

The word *tabanka*[1] is used today by speakers of five different languages. It has been widely used in the varieties of Portuguese spoken in Cape Verde and Guinea-Bissau, in the Portuguese-based Creoles spoken in these countries, in some Caribbean variations of English (Allsopp 2003) and in Trinidad's English Creole (Winer 2009). One word, five languages and at least three different surface meanings form a synchronic picture that I want to scrutinize in its most simple form. The complete picture is far more complicated, involving other cognate words belonging to several languages spoken along the Upper Guinea Coast and diachronic processes of semantic fluctuation triggered by a long history of intersocietal encounters. As the term is largely unknown to most Brazilian Portuguese speakers, I begin with our two major dictionaries. The word is absent in the Aurélio dictionary, but in Houaiss's we find the following glosses: (1) African village or locality, usually fortified; (2) (Cape Verde) a kind of traditional fanfare on the Isle of Santiago (Houaiss 2001). The author adds that

the first entry in the Portuguese dictionaries appears in the 1881 Caldas Aulete dictionary.

In what follows, I will analyse the semantic fluctuations of the word *tabanka* over its five-century journey of thousands of kilometres from the west coast of Africa to Trinidad, with a strategic stop at the Cape Verde Islands. Etymological inquiry is traditionally a linguistics issue, somewhat distant from the usual concerns of today's anthropologists. Were we living at the time of the diffusionist debates in anthropology, with their main focus on the origins and dispersal of cultural artefacts, the present topic would hardly seem anachronistic and senseless. It is just as well that the diffusionist fad has to my relief been revisited of late under the guise of flows and counterflows of the globalized world system. This chapter presents my thus disguised ideas about the turbulences that have provoked semantic shifts in the word *tabanka* during its journey across the Atlantic Ocean.

The challenge I face in this essay is to show how words have travelled in time and space from one society to another, and how their meanings have been changed during this journey to adjust to new conditions of use. This issue is to some extent similar to the one in Merry's (2006) analysis of ideas of human rights: how they are appropriated by the vernaculars of various communities around the globe, have their core meanings changed and, thus transformed, are used to criticize everyday practices of violence. However, in comparison to the travelling terms treated by Merry, the appropriations and remakings I want to focus on differ radically from those of the journey of human rights ideas in the contemporary world in terms of their temporal depth. Unlike the spread of human rights ideas, the semantic shifts I deal with do not emanate from a single hegemonic source but rather from myriad flows that can hardly be accurately retraced. They are semantic changes that have been going on for centuries. Thus they bear a closer resemblance to certain changes in the moral ideas of the Semites as treated by Mauss (1985: 170). In his classic study on the gift, Mauss argues that the original meaning of the Arabic and Hebraic terms *sadaka* and *zedaqa* was related to the idea of justice. However, through centuries, the meanings of these words were gradually changed, eventually consolidating around the ideas of charity and alms. This chapter will examine something similar.

Like any etymological research, mine is riddled with guesses that can be very creative are but hardly ever open to the falsification test. The path the term *tabanka* took in both time and in space cannot be fully retraced with the data now available. All I can do is revisit short stretches of its route and reach some conclusions as to the landscape it has covered, namely, the creolized social system that comprised the Atlantic World from the onset of European expansion in the mid-fifteenth century, which I will depict as the intersection of several cultural ecumenes.

Journey Inland: From Protection Against Violence
to the Comforts of Home

In this section I focus on the semantic changes of terms that originate from the supposedly West Atlantic root *abank*(?). These terms originally conveyed the meaning of fortification, which provided protection against violence brought about by conflicts between social groupings. For 300 years they went through semantic shifts, taking on new meanings referring to the inhabited space of the house, the kin group and the village.

Although tracing the routes of this word's diffusion through these five languages is not my main focus, the first question to be asked concerns its origins. Of uncertain etymology, it seems to have sprung from the dozens of languages of the so-called West Atlantic family that are spoken on the African coast from Senegal to Sierra Leone – including Wolof, Fula/Peul, Diola, Balanta, Banyun, Pepel, Manjaco, Mancanha, Baga and Temne – and have great syntactic and morphological similarities. In many of them, we find a supposed root, *abank*(?), that encompasses the semantic field around ideas of locality, dwelling, protection, safety, defence, and (territorial) membership unit.

Among the contemporary Baga-Sitem of the Republic of Guinea, the word *abanka* (pl. *cibanka*) refers to a village section or common yard of a residence cluster of three or four exogamous groups patrilineally descended (*kor,* 'belly') from a founding ancestor who came from elsewhere (a stranger). The Baga *abanka* refers to a corporate group and underlines a social identity that is often more important than *kor* or kinship. Each *abanka* has a protector spirit (*amanko*) that brings prosperity, protection and well-being to its members (Sarró 2009: 35–38).[2] It seems, however, that the word *abanka* exists only in the Baga-Sitem language. Other Baga groups have other words to express other territorial logic. Ramon Sarró informed me (personal communication) that in the Bulongic language the term *ebene* covers more or less the same meaning as *abanka,* but they do not seem to stem from the same root.

According to Walter Hawthorne (2003: 12), the Balanta people of Guinea-Bissau call the compact village they live in *tabanka.* It is the most important unit of Balanta social organization. People living in the same village share common interests, and the most important rituals and collective work associated with agricultural activities are performed and organized at this local level. Key institutions of Balanta social organization, such as age grades, the council of elders, and marriages, function at the *tabanka* level, working to strengthen community bonds. However, the Balanta recognize that *tabanka* means more than a unit of cohesive nature. It is also the unit within which the major cleavages of society take place, along lines of kin, generation, and gender (2003: 120). As a membership unit, the Balanta *tabanka* is the stage where processes of integration and

conflict occur – a stage that has a complex history. Hawthorne (2003: 121–23) explains that in precolonial times the Balanta lived in dispersed settlements in Guinea's hinterland. Political upheaval caused by the Mande expansion since the thirteenth century and then by European expansion that intensified the slave trade pushed them off to the mangrove seeking refuge. In this new environment they learned how to grow wet rice and founded compact villages, the *tabanka*s, better suited for protection from slave traders.[3]

I have consulted other specialists in Balanta culture and society, and they all agreed that the word *tabanka* is strange to Balanta language. Although they concur with Hawthorne's interpretation, they point out that his Balanta informants were using a Creole word to talk about some aspects of the group social organization. In other words, they mean that if the term *tabanka* has been used by Balanta speakers, it is a recent borrowing from the Creole language of Guinea-Bissau.

The contemporary Mancanha in Guinea-Bissau use the same term to mean village, but it seems to be a loan word from the Creole language that emerged on Luso-African settlements, or from neighbouring peoples. According to linguist Jean-Louis Rougé (2004: 352; see also Buis 1990: 258), among the Manjaco the term *N-tab* (also *untab*) designates village. The resemblance to the Creole *tabanka* is crystalline, but it may be misleading to take them as cognate words. They are more aptly a case of linguistic convergence (see below). In any case, one of the greatest ethnographers of this group informed me that the Manjaco word for village is *'utchak; bolai* is the term for hut, and *kato* is the word for house or dwelling (Eric Gable, personal communication).

Further north of the Manjaco territory, the Diola of Guinea-Bissau and Casamance seem also to have words that stem from the root **abank*(?). The southern Diola (Diola-Kassa) use the term *hankahu* to designate a lineage-based living area that comprises several houses. It is not a family house, which would be *ellupai,* but rather a lineage-based compound. Among the northern Diola (Diola-Fogny) the word would be *funk,* with the same meaning.[4] The similarity of these Diola words indicates that both are derived from the West Atlantic root **abank*(?). Moving north to Senegalese territory, we will find that the Wolof *tabakh* now means 'construction', 'wall' or 'building' (usually with hard, durable materials like cement and bricks, as opposed to *sampe,* which is building with soft materials like wood or mud).

I now move from the contemporary crystallizations around the root **abank*(?) in the West Atlantic language stock to examine how it was described by the first Portuguese and Luso-African travellers to the Guinea coast. The first written reference is by André Álvares de Almada (1964: 367), a Cape Verdean trader who, in describing the African coast in 1594, used the verbal form *atabancar* to refer to Sierra Leonean Manes warriors' custom of building fortifications within which they felt protected. He also used the noun form *atabanca* to designate the trenches the Manes dug (ibid.: 372). As a verb, the term seems to have been

incorporated into the Portuguese variant then spoken in Cape Verde and on the Guinea coast, and likely into the budding Portuguese-based Creole in the region. Thirty years later another Cape Verdean, André Donelha (1977 [1625]: 102), used the term *tabanka* to refer to the fences and walls with very high watchtowers that surrounded the villages of Sierra Leonean coastal peoples.[5] Another Cape Verdean trader, Francisco de Lemos Coelho, refers to the word *tabanca* in his seventeenth-century description of Cacheu, a Luso-African village in Guinea-Bissau. According to him, Cacheu was 'surrounded by a stockade formed of pointed stakes with sharp tips, fastened together with crossbars, and it has two gates which are closed at night. The fence is called the *tabanca* of Casa Forte' (Coelho 1990 [1684]: 149; see also Coelho 1990 [1669]: 34; 1990 [1684]: 151).

In his comment on Donelha's account, historian Paul Hair (1977: 250) reports that in the archaic forms of the Temne language, also in Sierra Leone, *ka-baŋca* meant fortification or palisaded villages (see also Hair 1967: 46, 56). Coelho's account of the use of the term *tabanka* in Cacheu leaves no doubt that this word entered the Creole language then spoken by the Luso-Africans as a loanword from Temne and other Mel languages spoken in Sierra Leone. The term was probably carried by coastal Sapi speakers (Temne, Bullom) who sought refuge and protection at Cacheu after the Mani invaded their territories in the mid-sixteenth century.[6]

Early evidence of a slight fluctuation affecting the meaning of *tabanka* (or one of its West African cognates) came from a Scottish missionary named Henry Brunton in 1802. After a sojourn in the area that is presently Sierra Leone and Guinea, he published in Edinburgh a book containing a grammar and a vocabulary of Susu language. His vocabulary list there contains the word *bankhi,* which he glossed as dwelling house (1802: 63) without any allusion to fortification or palisade. This evidence presents a problem for the case I am trying to make. Susu is a Mande language, so it belongs to a language family of the Niger Congo stock, quite different from the West Atlantic languages supposed to be the origin of the root **abank*(?) (see note 5). How to explain this? Bruce Mouser (personal communication) allows that *bankhi* is truly a Susu word, although he asserts that Brunton collected it in Baga territory. Thus it might be a case of borrowing from Baga language. According to Ramon Sarró (personal communication), words typically end with /i/ in Susu, especially when they are borrowings from other languages.

Irrespective of its origin, my point in this connection is that the Susu *bankhi* represents a first step towards a semantic shift from protection against violence and warlike activities (clearly associated with the slave trade) to the feeling of warmth characteristic of the domestic domain, and the practice of sociability associated with activities taking place in family and neighbourhood circles. The paucity of available data impedes a fully satisfactory explanation of why this se-

mantic shift occurred, somehow unexpectedly, among the Susu living in Baga territory at the beginning of the nineteenth century, a period of visceral violence linked to the slave trade and the growing instabilities and rearrangements of political boundaries in the area. Although left largely unexplained, the fact is that some decades later, this semantic fluctuation came to full completion along the same lines I have just examined in the Creole Luso-African settlements of Guinea-Bissau.

Written sources suggest that in the Luso-African Creole spoken on the Guinea *praças,* up until the late nineteenth century, the term *tabanka* was used to mean a fortified locality.[7] A close look at the glossary (Portuguese-Creole) published by Barros (1902) suggests that the term *tabanka* was still undergoing a semantic shift at the beginning of the twentieth century in the Creole society of Guinea-Bissau. He translated Portuguese *paliçada* (palisade) as *tabanca* (1902: 188); Portuguese *aldeia* (village) was *aldya* (ibid.: 85); and Portuguese *murado* (to be walled) was glossed as *q'o ten tabanca* (ibid.: 186) These examples suggest that the meaning of *tabanka* in the Creole language was in conformity with the old usage. However, Barros also translated Portuguese *povoação* (settlement) as *tabanca* (ibid.: 270), a gloss that suggests the semantic field of the Creole word was undergoing a process of lexical expansion similar to that of the word *bankhi* in the Susu language. From then on, it lost the semantic component of fortification, defence and protection to mean simply village or settlement. It was certainly a gradual process. I first came across this word meaning settlement or village in official Portuguese documents from 1850 and on. It referred to the quarters of the auxiliaries of Luso-African traders – newcomers to Creole settlements – located just outside Bissau. It was called *tabanka dos grumetes* (sailors' village or quarter). Curiously, they were set apart from the Luso-African town, locally known as *praça,* by a wall built by the colonial governor that stood until 1913. The wall was not designed to protect the African village, but rather to assure that the Bissau Creole population had some security and control over the frequent abuses by auxiliaries of dubious loyalty. Only then – from 1850 on – did the term meaning settlement or village set in the Guinea Creole.

This semantic change is an example of lexical expansion that is quite common in Creole languages, as may be gauged by the central place the relexification hypothesis has in creole studies. Hancock (1980) identifies twelve categories of lexical progression in general. The case of *tabanka* is dubious: it might be explained as semantic extension – 'a new interpretation for an item, in addition to, or in replacement of, its original use' (Hancock 1980: 74); semantic shift – 'the same as semantic extension, except that the original meaning has not survived' (ibid.: 78); convergence –'two forms originally distinct acquire the same phonological surface form' (ibid.: 79); or adoption – 'the acquisition of items from other languages' (ibid.: 81).[8] I cannot advance much on this regard, but refer to Jean-Louis Rougé's (2004: 352) argument for convergence, according to which

the current meaning of *tabanka* in Guinean Creole as 'village' comes from convergence with Manjaco *N-tab* or *untab*.

I should mention, however, that the word's use has an evident sociological connotation. In Guinea Creole, *tabanka* is not used to designate just any village, but only the villages of local indigenous peoples. Urban clusters inhabited by Portuguese and creolized Luso-Africans are called *praças,* regardless of size and location. This dichotomy is a clear manifestation of an opposition that is constitutive of the Creole world, namely, the cultural cleavage between the space of 'Creoleness' – the *praças* – and that of 'Africanness' – the *tabancas,* from where Creole society has historically recruited most of its members.

Journey to the Islands: From Territory to Conviviality

In this section I focus on the second stop of the long journey of the semantic fluctuations of *tabanka.* This stop altered the route already taken, which had led to the idea of village, reflecting a move towards the idea of conviviality.

In the word's journey to the Creole of Santiago, I notice a semantic change that appears to be radical but in fact is deeply connected to the underlying meanings it has on the Guinea coast.[9] According to the Cape Verdean writer Félix Monteiro (1948: 14), in the remote past the word was also used in Santiago to mean settlement or village, but its original reference to a territorial unit was lost, and nowadays most Creole speakers in Cape Verde do not recognize it.[10] Interestingly, what Monteiro calls an old usage (*tabanka* as village) is in fact quite recent. Presently, Santiago people, especially the adults, take *tabanka* to mean a mutual aid association that is very important to the peasants in the interior and to the residents of poor neighbourhoods in the town of Praia. For the young people and those who come from the windward islands, however, this reference to mutual aid has been blurred: now the word is mostly used to designate a kind of popular feast unique to the islands of Santiago and Maio and, more recently, a mass-culture musical style derived from the music played during *tabanka* festivities. Thus, to speak of *tabanka* in Cape Verde is to speak of feasting and joy, of striking sounds and colours. Nevertheless, something of the original sense of village or settlement still remains, for if *tabanka* is festivity, it is always the festivity of a village, a neighbourhood or even a cluster of scattered houses. This is why one speaks of Tabanka of Várzea, of Achada Santo António, of Achada Grande (Praia neighbourhoods), of Chã de Tanque, Lém Cabral, and other places on the island. Hence, whether as an institution or as a feast, the word in Santiago Creole retains a metonymic relationship vis-à-vis the Guinean meaning of settlement, in the sense that the part suggests the whole.

Large-scale festivities cannot occur without social actors to organize complex activities and take on responsibility for the efficacy of the performance. In other words, if *tabanka* means festivity, it also means a type of institution that leads or

organizes the feast. Although less visible to the Cape Verdeans of the windward islands and the country's larger urban centres, this institutional component continues to be the *tabanka*'s raison d'être. Put in this way, the Cape Verde *tabanka* is an institution with a complex structure that recruits members from a territorial base and works as a brotherhood, or a mutual aid association.

As an institutional association, the structure of the *tabanka* copies that of society to create a miniature social system. Just like a society, *tabanka*s have chiefs, law and order agents, crooks, prestigious personages, and values and symbols of their own. They also have kings and queens, ministers, physicians, policemen and thieves, soldiers with guns and uniforms, distinguished people as counsellors and ambassadors, and regular, subordinate people who are called *catibos* (captives) and *negas* (black women). In a critical and ironic mode, their subordinate group mimics the slave society of the past and the inequalities of the present. In the vast majority of *tabanka* pageants, this group is classified by the same categories that once referred to slaves. It is mostly made up of women.

Tabanka insignias are rated as values. Among them, the banner representing the patron saint has the highest value. It is starkly simple, a metaphoric rendition of the believers' poverty and purity. Besides the patron saint's banner, there are others of a different nature. Extremely colourful, they display very different designs, revealing the workings of a syncretic mindset that voraciously assimilates everything that comes its way. They lend life and colour to the brotherhood members' long excursions towards the houses of the feast promoters, called *reis (rainhas) de agasalho* (shelter kings or queens), who always live in the neighbouring villages. These insignias of life and colour reflect the Cape Verdeans' particular way of reproducing their own society, which is based on emigration strategies. Only in a society of emigrants can we find, as commonplace objects, banners of Turkish soccer teams, stylized national flags from various countries, and the typical admixture of mass culture in a globalized world, juxtaposing American and Jamaican colours and symbols, a black hero like Bob Marley and an icon of mass culture like Michael Jackson. Alongside flags and banners, musical instruments are also powerful symbols of the *tabanka*s: two or three crude drums, a collection of three to six seashells (conches), and a military trumpet in some brotherhoods. The production and distribution of these goods do not satisfy local demand, and their consequent rarity lends prestige to the owner associations.

Also worth considering are the values that are transmitted by these feasts. I limit myself to those values that, with critical irony, attempt to reproduce an idea of order typical of the colonial society that serves as the *tabanka*'s model. Three elements are vigorously present at the brotherhood rituals, especially during long pageants for collecting gifts from the shelter kings. First, the value of order and discipline is materialized in the act of queuing up and in the general concern for a highly organized and orderly march. The pageant is more than a mere outing: it is framed as a Creolized rendition of military marches and pilgrimages (Trajano

Filho 2011). The *catibos* and *negas* must remain strictly in single file; there is even a character responsible for whipping them whenever they step out of it. A second feature representing order and social control, satirically lived out at the *tabanka* feast, is the organization of time. Treated in utter caricature, respect for schedule is often acted out in ritual games during the feast. A *tabanka* member who arrives late to any of his activities is punished severely. Taken to a corner that functions as a jail, he is tied up, a crown of thorns on his head, to endure the jeers of passers-by. Thus, with fines and arrests, outlandish rigour in the control of time, and a military-like obsession with queues, the *tabanka*s ritually live through the order, discipline and hierarchy of the dominant society in both the present and in the past while also bringing vigour, rhythm and colour to the ritual.

Each *tabanka* has its own patron saint chosen from popular Catholicism with celebrations in June (Saint Anthony, Saint John and Saint Peter). Their image and that of the holy family are kept and venerated in chapels and courts erected in their honour. These are also places for prayer and pleas for abundance, plenty of rain at the right time, good harvests in the coming months and harmony for the district and its residents. Under the protection of the patron saints, these chapels house, for their delight, the offerings of the *tabanka*'s members and its shelter kings and queens. The gifts are auctioned at the end of the common meals that begin on the saint's day, which today last for four or five days.

Despite surface differences in the meaning of the word *tabanka* in Cape Verde and in Guinea, I wish to emphasize some connections between them. In the first place, whether an institution or a festivity, in Santiago Creole the word maintains a metonymic relationship with the idea of a living place, as a part that suggests the whole. Moreover, like *cibanka* among the Baga-Sitem and many other peoples of the Guinea coast, a Cape Verde *tabanka* has a patron saint as its protector spirit, a source of well-being, prosperity, fertility and abundance. The allegories, uniforms and musical instruments of the Cape Verde associations are called *armamento,* which I gloss as 'weaponry'. Military and religious meaning pervades both role ascription in the processions towards the home of the shelter king and the form these pageants take. Commanders, soldiers, policemen and captives parade in a parody of order and discipline. After all, to leave one's place of residence and march through valleys and riverbanks to other places is, cosmologically speaking, to brave the dangers of a no-man's land. Underlying all this are ingrained ideas of protection and defence against both mystical and human enemies in the deepest sense of the African palisaded *tabanka*s. Lastly, the existence of these associations in Santiago and the perception the local Creole elites have of them also hint at a constitutive opposition in the Creole world analogous to that in Guinea-Bissau. Here, instead of a cultural cleavage between the spaces of Creoleness and Africanness, the social division is between, on the one hand, the peasants in the interior and the poor in the Praia urban periphery, and on the other, the educated elite of the plateau.

Across the Ocean: Towards Affection

My analysis of the semantic changes of the word *tabanka* could end here, and the reader could go directly to my concluding remarks. However, I choose to take a more audacious stance and face the semantic turbulences that might have affected the core meaning of this word in its likely journey to the New World. The modal used to express probability or condition and the journey's depiction as but a possibility indicate that we are navigating an ocean of speculations that are hardly falsifiable. There is both ônus and bônus in such an endeavour. The price we risk paying is widely known: we might be facing a case of false cognate. I firmly believe, however, that we cannot be charged much for it, because one 'can never tell where a word comes from' when dealing with language contact in a diffuse setting (Le Page 1998: 66).[11] On the other hand, two bonuses might await us at the finishing line. The first would be the refutation of the allegation of false cognate, which would mean gaining an extra layer of knowledge about the historical flows from the African coast to the Caribbean Islands. The second is somewhat independent of the ônus and has to do with the general hypothesis of this work, namely, that intersocietal encounters (in our case, between creolized ecumenes) stir up semantic turbulences in classificatory categories, values and symbols. In the case of encounters between creolized ecumenes, semantic changes affecting a particular cultural category tend to preserve part of the previous meaning it had in its original setting.

The word *tabanka*'s journey from the Guinea coast to the Cape Verde islands and the surface semantic shifts that occurred during its travels are related to the unremitting intercommunication between ecumenes (i.e. that of the Upper Guinea Coast, and the Luso-African ones) in the context of the creolization process that gave birth to a Creole society in Cape Verde. These long-term intersocietal encounters would likely have caused some kind of social and cultural turbulence powerful enough to shake the cultural kit of conceptual tools for thinking and conceiving sociability, conviviality, security and protection while still maintaining some degree of continuity with the deep semantic core of the root **abank*(?).

I now turn, very briefly, to a supposedly third moment of the *tabanka* trip, stopping strategically on the island of Trinidad off the coast of Venezuela. Here the word means neither a village (fortified or not) nor a mutual aid institution that manages reciprocity within and across villages. Revealing yet another semantic transformation, the Trinidadian *tabanka* refers to a specific kind of suffering and oppression, somewhat similar to a state biomedicine classifies as a psychopathology. According to anthropologist Roland Littlewood (1998: 121), it refers to 'the inappropriate psychological response to desertion'. This is a working-class cultural category, unlike the idea of adultery, which is restricted to middle-class settings. It happens when a man's wife abandons him, particularly for another

man, and the abandoned husband succumbs to loss and misery rather than resume life as usual. Disheartened, he begins to show signs of lethargy and anorexia and to lose interest in work. He wanders aimlessly through the streets or retires to the solitude of his house to nurture his hatred for the unfaithful woman. He drinks and smokes excessively, eats little or nothing, does not sleep and, in extreme cases, dies of neglect or accident, or commits suicide (Littlewood 1993: 47–52; 1998: 85–86, 117–19).

This kind of disorder, verging on madness, is not caused by the fact of being abandoned, but by the victim's response to abandonment. Moreover, it should not be taken for lovesickness. It only occurs when the man and woman have had a sexual and economic relationship, especially when they were wedded in the Church. In Trinidad, the *tabanka* is basically a form of emotional expression that afflicts men much more frequently than it does women, and appears among the Creole and rural populations as well as the *tibourgs* (petty bourgeoisie) and *béke negres* (black whites) who aspire to the white middle-class lifestyle (Littlewood 1998: 117).[12] Contrary to what one might expect, those unaffected by it take it as an opportunity to heap scorn and irony upon the disgruntled husband. They scoff at his economic and psychological investment in another person in a world riddled with precariousness and individualism. As Littlewood (1998: 121–22) clearly perceived in regard to the humour of *tabanka,* this is not a criticism of the faithfulness and respectability inherent in Christian marriage, but rather of the somewhat snobbish aspirations of persons from the lower strata of society who emulate a lifestyle based on white or local middle-class values. The *tabanka* victim loses his reputation, an important value in the lower ranks of Creole society. He also loses the little respectability he so unsteadily won when he mimicked the bourgeois ethos by getting married, respectability being a central value for the middle strata of society.[13]

With such different renderings in Trinidad, Cape Verde and Guinea, it would be unsurprising if the relationship between these words in Creole languages so far apart were mere homonymy with no common underlying meaning. My research is still very inconclusive, if not negative. I consulted several specialists on Caribbean Creole languages but got no definite answer. Lise Winer told me that the term seems to have been introduced recently; the earliest written record she found dated from 1957. She also referred to vague and highly speculative interpretations that the Trinidadian *tabanka* might come from *tabaka* in Kikongo, a language spoken in the Congo and Angola. *Tabaka* can be glossed as 'sell out or buy up completely' (Winer 2009: 871). In Trinidad (also in Guyana and Grenada, according to Allsopp 2003) it would have acquired the meaning of loss of love. Other authors believe that in the Caribbean, the word comes from a term in Kituba, a 'contact-based' (Creole?) language variety spoken in Central Africa. It is worth noting that a variety of this Creole language, called *Kikongo ya leta* or *Kikongo-matadi,* emerged in late nineteenth century as a lingua franca and later

became the vernacular language of people living at administrative outposts in west, south and east Kinshasa. The expression *Kikongo-matadi* refers to a railroad that connects Matadi (a port town) to Kinshasa. It was built by workers brought in from Senegal and Sierra Leone (Mufwene 2009: 213) who spoke various languages of the West Atlantic stock, source of the root **abank*(?).

Littlewood (1993: 266) also attempted to pinpoint the etymology of the Trinidadian *tabanka* but concluded that it is obscure and likely to be multiple. He suggests that it comes from a cognate of the French-based Creole *ta banque,* meaning bankruptcy or breach of contract, of the Creole *ti blanc* (little white) or even of the Jamaican *bacha* (little banana, in this case, lack of erection). Another possible origin would be *tabanco,* a Spanish Central American word referring to 'a place for castrated cocks'. Allsopp (2003) suggests it might have come from the cognate (or borrowed word) *tabangke* in Makushi (a Carib language), which means 'wonder.'

In any case, many Africans who arrived in Trinidad as slaves came from the Upper Guinean coast, a region where a number of local languages share the root **abank*(?), giving credence to the hunch that the term is of Guinean origin. Even if future linguistic research reveals that this is not the case, it seems that the similarity between the Guinean, Cape Verdean and Trinidadian forms is not merely an accidental homonymy, because this part of the Caribbean has been an area of intersection between various cultural ecumenes that arose during creolization processes triggered by European expansion since the late fifteenth century. To Trinidad converged people, language forms and items as well as a repertoire of values and ideas from continental America, other Caribbean Islands, the East Indies, Europe and Africa (including the Upper Guinea Coast). This convergence may have produced a kind of semantic turbulence that altered the original meaning of the word that the Trinidadian *tabanka* derives so as to impregnate it with some connotations (or transformations of them) of the Cape Verdean and Guinean *tabanka.*

Furthermore, the gap in meaning is not too wide; a semantic continuity in the use of the word is visible in the three Creole languages. First, there is a connotation of an intense but ambiguous feeling of security, protection and sociability. The Trinidadian case involves a clear structural inversion, where the positive signal associated with this feeling becomes negative. A second resemblance lies in the mode of parody, caricature and criticism in the *tabanka* of Cape Verde and Trinidad. Finally, in all three countries, the term indicates a basic opposition between social groups or cultural forms: in Guinea, between spaces of Creoleness and Africanness; in Cape Verde, between peasant social forms and the lowest strata of society on one hand, and the educated elite on the other; and in Trinidad, between the structural principles of reputation and respectability, quite similar to the Cape Verdean case. Figure 8.1 synthesizes the various steps taken by this word in its journey from the coast of African to the Caribbean.
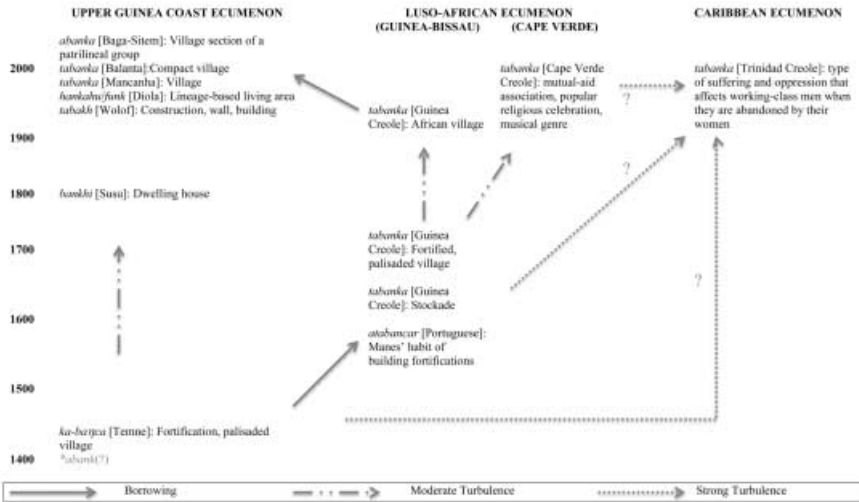
Figure 8.1. Synoptic Chart of Semantic Shifts

Concluding Remarks

Though I still have a long way to go, I will conclude by saying that a close look at the semantic fluctuations of the term *tabanka* suggests a scenario of historical connections between various cultural ecumenes that, in turn, derive from cultural and linguistic creolization, and all overlap on the Caribbean Islands. I take up the idea of the ecumene from a long anthropological tradition that includes the work of Kroeber (1946), Kopytoff (1987), Hannerz (1991) and Mintz (1996). Inspired by these authors, I take ecumene to mean a field of intense communication through both time and space, where social agents share, alongside a number of isolated traits – idiom, institutions, culinary habits, naming practices and symbolic forms – a deep sense of common history, maintained and reproduced regardless of spatial contiguity (see Mintz 1996: 297).

Kroeber's ecumene is a 'great historic unit … a frame within which a particular combination of processes happened to achieve certain unique results' (1946: 9). As I see it, though, what makes it unique is not the particular combination of processes or shared cultural traits, but the way its internal differences are acted out. It is bound together by a kind of relationship between alterities that is not based on the logic of distinctive oppositions between sociocentric categories of group identity (Pina Cabral 2010: 7–8), but upon the exercise of a 'working acceptance', in Goffman's expression. This working acceptance, says Goffman (1967: 11), is the fundamental feature of any interaction, as it enables participants in social encounters to deploy self-regulation. Working acceptance is a ritual act. It is in the minutest of interaction rites that we learn how to be perceptive; to have feelings related to the self, a self connected to a positive self-image

(the face); to be proud and dignified when dealing with other people; to display consideration, sensitiveness, tact and demeanour. In short, these tiny rituals require a certain indulgence, a sort of 'temporary truce' that lets the interaction go on even amongst constant offenses.

In contexts of intersubjectivity, the ecumene becomes visible in everyday life when it assures social agents (not necessarily in terms of a reflexive awareness) that they have a shared history, especially regarding how difference is perceived and how persons are made. Thus objectified by social agents, the ecumene whets our appetite for thinking far beyond the diffusion of cultural traits, acculturation or syncretism. As Pina Cabral (2010: 16) states, it makes us identify echoes that allow denizens of the same ecumene to recognize each other. These echoes render their world more intelligible.

Thinking of *tabanka*'s long journey from the west coast of Africa to the Caribbean islands as part of a process that linked various ecumenes frees us of the empiricist temptation to try to understand that world in terms of the diffusion of individual cultural traits. It also saves us from falling into lazy generic notions such as 'the world in flux', 'Black Atlantic' and others. It forces us to ask two questions I deem quite important. First, what happens when cultural ecumenes come to an intersection? This makes us ponder what sort of turbulence is behind the semantic fluctuations I have just examined, and how strongly they disturb the conceptual kit of cultural categories that frame the experience of the social actors (ideas of protection, security, sociability and reciprocity, as well as the lack of them). The second question addresses the concrete object of my analysis. Although I have focused on the semantic fluctuations of a single lexical item, I hope I have shown that they are associated with continuities and discontinuities in ways of conceiving sociability and difference. True, I could have done this by following the journey of any other cultural object towards the intercommunication between ecumenes. But would I have been able to do so with any object? How do we choose the items we carry in our luggage on these trips that, after all, are no more or less than the expansion and contraction of ecumenes?

Acknowledgements

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Notes

1. The spelling of this word varies a lot. In the Portuguese dictionaries, it is spelt *tabanca,* but Creole dictionaries spell it *tabanka.* In this essay I will adopt the latter form because it suggests a non-Portuguese origin.
2. According to Hair (1967: 46), the Baga word is *ke-baŋka,* meaning 'village'.
3. See Horton (1976) for a dynamic model that relates state and stateless societies in West Africa. The pattern of settlement (dispersed and compact villages) plays a key role in this model.
4. I should thank respectively Joanna Davidson and Peter Mark for this information.
5. He also uses this word to refer to the stockade made of posts and pieces of trees that encircled the Mandingo village of Cação, on the River Gambia (1977: 150). Commenting on this passage, Teixeira da Mota (1977: 300–302) notes that other descriptions testify to the existence of palisades in Mandingo villages. However, this does not mean that the word has a Mande origin.
6. It is interesting to note that the Temne word did not enter the English-based Creole spoken by the Krio in the Freetown peninsula, much closer to Temne traditional territory than to Cacheu.
7. See Oliveira (1888–1889: 307): 'The most important settlements are protected by strong *tabancas* … around the houses and huts of these villages is constructed a type of wall, with tall and thick trunks of trees'.
8. See also Baptista (2007) for an analysis of congruence between substractal languages and Portuguese in creole formation.
9. I leave unexplored a possible derivation of the Santiagoan Creole *funco* (poor housing, hut) from the West Atlantic root **abank*(?). This word appears in several historical sources meaning house (Álvares 1990), granary (Álvares 1990 [1615]; Kup 1961: 102) chapel or shrine (Álvares 1990) and porch or balcony (Almada 1964: 348). These authors use it in their descriptions of events taking place in the Isle of Bissau and in various parts of Sierra Leone. According to Hair (1977: 266), similar words exist in modern Temne: *αŋ-fuŋk* (granary) and *αŋ-puŋkaŋ* (balcony, porch). The similarity to the Diola *funk* is remarkable (see above).
10. See also Carreira (1964) and Rougé (2004) for the meanings of this word in the Luso-African cultural universe.
11. The opposition between focused and diffuse linguistic ideologies and practices has been discussed by Le Page & Tabouret-Keller (1985) and Le Page (1998).
12. Nowadays, the meaning of *tabanka* has been extended to designate bereavement and other losses (Littlewood (1998: 117). It has been employed, e.g., to refer to the feeling of loss related to political competition or disputes, especially after elections, which is called

'political *tabanka*' (cf. Winer 2009: 871). Heike Drotbohm (personal communication) informed me that in Trinidadian urban contexts, the word has been used in colloquial register to express a feeling of longing or missing something precious. In addition, it seems that the word is going through a semantic extension in certain social circles, whereby it begins to play a new role in everyday discourses. The exact direction of this change is not yet clear, but the Trinidadian *tabanka* seems to be a good candidate to stand for the ethos of the country's culture.

13. Littlewood borrows from Wilson (1995) the opposition between reputation and respectability as the two primary principles of Caribbean social structures.

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Chapter 9

Rice and Revolution

Agrarian Life and Global Food Policy on the Upper Guinea Coast

Joanna Davidson

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Introduction

Along the Upper Guinea Coast, rice has played a significant role in shaping land and livelihoods, persons and population flows, desires, dreams, disappointments, spiritual and moral life, and interactions and transactions for many hundreds of years, or perhaps even a few thousand. For several centuries this area of West Africa was known to Europeans as the Grain or Rice Coast, signalling their recognition of the importance, abundance and defining aspect of rice in this region (or, more selfishly, their own interest in securing this rice in their trade along the coast). But both before and after European dominance in this area, rice played a defining role in residents' interactions with each other and with the various outsiders who traded, raided and invaded in their midst. Rice in this region has been linked to the rise of the great precolonial West African states of Ghana, Mali and Songhai (Grist 1959; Osseo-Asare 2005). The rice-growing landscape – especially the mangrove swamps – that evokes the topographical imaginary of this region has often served as a refuge from various external forces and foes, from centuries-old Islamic incursions (Paulme 1963; Linares 1981) to more recent iconoclasts (Sarró 2009), and from Atlantic slavers (Hawthorne 2003) to more recent civil strife (Richards 2006).

   This chapter provides a broad view of the history and interpenetration of rice in social, political, religious and ecological domains across the Upper Guinea Coast, chronicling also the current difficulties of residents in this region who are no longer able to grow enough of it. I have divided the chapter into two parts. Part One, in addition to synthesizing the general history of rice in the region, focuses on a specific population of Upper Guinea Coast residents – the Diola of Guinea-Bissau – as they confront the challenges of a dramatically altered environmental and economic landscape. Their experiences are unfolding at a time of revitalized attention to agricultural development in Africa, particularly under

the auspices of the New Green Revolution for Africa. Part Two then examines this resuscitated effort to address the plight of African farmers. By first setting the stage with an ethnographic portrayal of a rice-based society coming to terms with profound changes in its natural, social and religious world, I hope to give readers a sense of the severe limitations of high modernist and antipolitical development approaches to addressing the complexities of agrarian change and rural poverty in postcolonial Africa.[1]

Part One: Sacred Rice

After a few months of residency in a Diola village in north-western Guinea-Bissau, I was deeply immersed in a life where rice dominates one's actions, preoccupations, even dreams. I had harvested ripe rice at the height of the dry season, lugged baskets laden with freshly cut rice from the paddies to the village, helped pound and winnow rice at my adopted family's home, and cooked rice over wood fires in large pots of heavily salted water. I had eaten rice at least three times a day, every day, sometimes served with small fish or a sauce of boiled hibiscus leaves, but mostly plain rice – *kutangu,* as it is called in Crioulo – morning, afternoon and night. I had eaten such rice not just in my daily meals but also in ceremonial contexts, when it was prepared in enormous pots and distributed among participants who gathered in small groups around a shared tin bowl. I had seen unhusked rice used to decorate funeral grounds, strung on cords connecting gigantic cottonwood trees and hung in bouquets around the central platform where the corpse was seated. Small sachets of rice often encircled a young girl's waist at a neighbourhood dance, and celebrants at intervillage wrestling matches wore delicately balanced bundles as headdresses. I had discussed rice with my neighbours and friends, or rather, listened as they spoke endlessly of rice, sometimes in technical terms (seed variations, irrigation methods, transplantation practices), sometimes in worried tones ('there's not enough rice to go around anymore'; 'our granaries are empty') and sometimes in metaphorical tropes ('our money is rice'; 'rice is our life'). Rice is omnipresent in Diola economic, social and symbolic life. It is the centre of social gossip; people regularly discuss whose supply is abundant and whose is depleted. Rice is the medium of exchange during life-cycle redistributive processes such as weddings, funerals and initiations. And rice is the ticket to ritual power, as spirit shine ceremonies require abundant expenditures of one's crop. Diola lives, like those of most rice-growing people in this region, are permeated by rice. Growing, eating, displaying, wearing, discussing and revering rice. It was ubiquitous. When I closed my eyes at night, panicles of rice swayed behind my eyelids.

Scholars of the Diola have consistently offered rich portrayals of this rice-oriented society. Even when rice is not their intended subject, its presence still pervades their pages (see e.g. Almada 1964 [1594]; Baum 1999; Coelho 1953

[1669]; Lauer 1969; Linares 1970, 1981, 1985, 1992; Mark 1985; Pélissier 1966; Thomas 1959, 1963). As Linares sums up, 'Rice is the symbol of ethnicity, of continuity, of all that is traditionally Diola. … Rice keeps men tied to the land, village-bound, and wholeheartedly peasant' (Linares 1970: 223). I myself did not go to the Diola region of northwest Guinea-Bissau to study rice. And yet, ten years after my first Diola rice harvest, I still find myself returning again and again to rice, not only as a central organizing feature of Diola social life but as the 'thing' that mediates their encounters and exchanges with others, as well as their reflections and reassessments of themselves.

    Diola see rice as part of a covenant with their supreme deity, Emitai, in which they work hard to cultivate the crop and Emitai sends rain to nourish it (see Baum 1999). Throughout my fieldwork in 2001–2003 and during my return visits over the past eight years, I saw this covenant in action in Diola farmers' arduous efforts in the rice paddies, their commitment to well-organized work groups at crucial moments in the agricultural cycle, their regular libations – and occasional costly sacrifices – at spirit shrines to propitiate their gods and bargain for rain, and their careful child-rearing practices that socialize young people into an ethical life of hard work and no theft (see Davidson 2007, 2009). I also heard these sentiments regularly expressed in anthropomorphic and deistic references to rice. 'The rice is pregnant', my work associates would note as we walked through a paddy. 'Rice', my neighbours would tell me, 'is sacred'.[2]

    This concept of sacred rice is the centrepiece of Senegalese filmmaker Ousmane Sembene's portrayal of French colonial brutality in southern Senegal in his 1971 film *Emitai.* After conscripting young Diola men to fight in the French army in World War II, colonial officials demanded locally produced rice as a tax from the Casamance Diola villagers so adept at producing a surplus. Despite the otherwise caricatured portrayal of Diola religious life – elders sit amongst human skulls and sacrifice animal after animal in order to appease their gods, while their wives are held at gunpoint under a scorching sun until they hand over their rice – Sembene did, I think, capture a central dilemma in Diola (and probably other rice-cultivating peoples') social and spiritual life. In addition to quite accurately portraying the physical rhythms of rice cultivation, Sembene shows Diola struggling (and divided) over a thorny conundrum: How can they give away their rice, which is sacred to them? And how could their gods abandon them – the humans that propitiate them – for the sake of rice? This is encapsulated in perhaps the most problematic scene, when the dying 'chief' argues with the gods about what is more valuable: Rice? The people? The gods themselves?

    These questions never get answered and might still be asked today, although under very different circumstances. In Sembene's film, Diola were pressured to give their surplus rice to the French colonial authorities, which they insisted was a violation of their principle of 'sacred rice'. In contemporary Diola-land in Guinea-Bissau, the main problem is that Diola can no longer grow *enough* rice –

not only to meet their ceremonial needs, or to have surplus for a potential tax, but even to feed their families. Diola villagers are on the frontlines of global climate change. Within the past thirty years, declining rainfall, desertification and widespread erosion in northern Guinea-Bissau have increasingly challenged Diola villagers' ability to provision themselves through the wet rice cultivation practices that have long defined them as a people. These environmental factors have combined with neglectful and disadvantageous government policies and programmes regarding rural development, difficult marketing conditions, and diminished labour capacity due to out-migration of youth, which all have worsened conditions in rural rice-growing regions of the country. By the time I arrived in Guinea-Bissau in 2001, most Diola villagers' granaries were empty. Many people regularly told me 'We used to be able to do this', referring to the complex technical, social and ritual system by which Diola produce, consume and revere rice. 'Now we cannot.'

Rice as a Total Social Phenomenon

Sacred rice is, above all, the idiom through which Diola talk about rice. Translated into anthropological terms, rice for Diola is a total social phenomenon in the classic Maussian sense. It mediates all social spheres and holds together the contradictions across them. It is the means through which people present themselves to themselves and others. In some senses, rice as a total social phenomenon could reflect one of the hallmarks of African agriculture more generally: the 'intense dependence of a people on a single crop' whatever that crop may be (Harlan, De Wet and Stemler 1976). That is, whether it is yams, sorghum, millet, or rice, the people cultivating these crops tend to be singularly and intensely focused on them.

> African agriculture is characterized by a rather unusual number of dominant crops. In Arabic *'aish* means 'life,' and in the Sudanic savanna the word is applied to sorghum – the staff of life, the source of sustenance. Life without sorghum is unthinkable. To the north in the Sahel, *'aish* means 'pearl millet.' Life itself depends on pearl millet and pearl millet alone, in that ecological zone. To the west around the Bend of the Niger, the word may be applied to rice by some Arabic speakers. Certainly in West Africa, from Senegambia to central Ivory Coast, a meal without rice is considered no meal at all. The same intense dependence of a people on a single crop is found in the yam zone. Existence itself depends on yams. In different parts of the continent other dominant crops are ensete, tef, and fonio. ... The current dependence of some people on maize and others on cassava indicates that dependence on single crops does not take long to establish. (Harlan et al. 1976: 14; see McCann 2005 for more on maize in Africa)

Diola villagers regularly invoke a recent past in which their mode of production yielded an abundance of surplus paddy rice, often stored for decades and used in great quantities for ceremonial purposes. The decrease in rice stores has already had significant consequences for Diola ritual activities. Most shrine ceremonies require copious paddy rice expenditures: 'sack rice' (as Diola call imported rice), even if it could be purchased in sufficient quantities, would not be acceptable in most ritual contexts. Beyond its impact on ritual life, diminishing crop yield has led to changes in what might be called the Diola social security system, particularly with regard to vulnerable segments of Diola society like widows. Given the already strained situation of monogamous households providing for their members, the levirate (*botunabu*) practice in which a widow and her children are customarily absorbed into her husband's brother's household has all but disappeared, leaving increasing numbers of widows to fend for themselves on the margins of society.[3] And at the most basic level, decreased rice in Diola-land has contributed to increased anxiety around sustenance, so that many Diola villagers face a worrisome quotidian experience and a more intense working life in what was already a taxing labour regime.

In some ways, questions about Diola and their dominant crop are in the same scholarly vein as other studies of the rise of particular crops and the way they shape desires and dramatically shift economic and political structures (Mintz 1985; Kurlansky 2002; McCann 2005).[4] These writers focus on the role of a single crop and its power to transform social, economic and cultural conditions across vast and previously less connected parts of the globe.[5] Other scholars have provided rich portrayals not just of sugar, salt and maize, but also of the power of rice in particular, both across the globe and within specific regions. The history of rice is often told with a focus on its abundance and adaptation across various ecological and political landscapes. Within West Africa too, scholars have focused on the importance and innovation of rice in enabling societies in this region to survive and often thrive (Carney 2001; Hawthorne 2003; Fields-Black 2008). Such accounts solidify the historic roots of rice in the Upper Guinea Coast and attest to the sophisticated technology that supported its growth as the region's dominant crop. They are, for the most part, rice success stories. The Upper Guinea Coast is cast as a site of agricultural and social innovation, whether in Hawthorne's (2003) account of how, in the face of the Atlantic slave trade, a stateless society had the resilience to develop the internal social institutions that enabled it to increase rice production; or in Carney's (2001) epic portrayal of the contribution of West Africans – especially women – to the Americas through their 'rice knowledge system.'

It is now well established that West Africans domesticated and cultivated rice for thousands of years, long before the arrival of the Europeans who were assumed to have brought both the seeds and know-how of rice agriculture to West African coastal peoples. The last several decades have seen a flourishing of

influential studies of rice in Africa and in Atlantic studies more broadly, rectifying many of the biased assumptions in previous understandings – both scholarly and popular – of rice's origins and importance as located exclusively in Asia. A considerable literature now attests to rice's important role in shaping societies on both sides of the Atlantic. The weight of evidence – historical (Pélessier 1966; Lauer 1969; Alpern 2008), botanical (Portères 1970, 1976; Harlan et al. 1976), climatological (G. Brooks 1985), geographical (Cormier-Salem 1999), archaeological (Linares 1971, 2002), linguistic (Fields-Black 2008), political-ecological (Richards 1985, 1986) and genealogical (Carney 2001, 2004) – restores rice history to its proper place in West Africa, even if the extension of such accounts across the Atlantic into New World systems continues to be debated (Eltis, Morgan and Richardson 2007). That rice was grown 3,500 years ago in the Niger delta; that it diffused to two secondary centres; that both the plant and the people adapted to particular saline, insalubrious, unpredictable conditions to thrive in a challenging landscape and develop a range of rice planting methods; that rice production even increased, in some cases, in spite of the ravages of the Atlantic slave trade (Hawthorne 2003) – all of this is now, unlike the semiaquatic rice plant itself, on terra firma.

Carney's (2001) watershed study consolidates such evidence to demonstrate Africans' roles in developing both the domesticated rice plant, *Oryza glaberrima,* and the highly sophisticated water management systems, cultivation techniques and trademark tools involved in successfully growing the crop in a tricky and unpredictable environment, long before European influence in the area. Building on Wood (1974) and Littlefield (1981), Carney breaks the narrative of African rice out of its relegated confinement to West Africa as something of 'local importance and antiquarian interest' (Sauer 1993), and provides African rice with a travel narrative as compelling as the more familiar accounts charted for the Asian cultigen. As in Asia, African people moving across the oceans to different ecosystems – whether of their own volition or not – brought with them both the seeds and the skills to transform environments, economies and societies anywhere they went (and anywhere they left behind).

Putting aside her more controversial extension of this argument, which focuses on the influence of this indigenous African 'rice knowledge system' in the Americas via the Atlantic slave trade,[6] I want to take up a point emphasized by Carney and others writing in her wake regarding the development of rice agriculture in West Africa, and ask about its implications today. Carney (2001), Hawthorne (2003) and Fields-Black (2008) each emphasize the *innovative* qualities of rice cultivation in the Upper Guinea Coast as a technologically ingenious approach in a challenging mangrove ecosystem, particularly in terms of its sophisticated *cruel/décrue* method of water management (Carney 2001: 40–46; Fields-Black 2008), and its socially innovative responses to the pressures of the Atlantic slave trade (Hawthorne 2003). Whereas these authors aimed to establish

a solid historical basis for rice-oriented cultures and their continual adaptation to myriad challenges – Mandinga expansion, European slave raiding, colonially enforced cash cropping, shaky transitions to independence and throughout all, a fluctuating set of environmental conditions and unpredictable pattern of rainfall – my experience as an ethnographer among Diola rice cultivators in postcolonial Guinea-Bissau leads me to ask: what now?

For the past ten years I have seen Diola respond to the decrease in rain and rice in varied, mostly highly individualized ways. The average household is able to produce only enough rice to last three months, and when you ask most Diola how they get by, they respond by saying 'kuji-kuji, son', referring to what chickens do to find insects and grubs for their day-to-day survival. They scrape together what they can to buy a kilo of imported Asian rice, which, though it cannot be used for ceremonial purposes, has become acceptable to eat. Another common strategy among adult Diola – those with families to care for – is to work harder and to scold (and often punish) those who shift their primary allegiance away from rice cultivation and towards other livelihood strategies (see Davidson 2009). Some Diola have invested in spirit shrine ceremonies to contract for more rain. Others have sought new religious identities and institutions – Catholic and Protestant are the two options available in the area – that enable both access to new resources and a religiously sanctioned opt-out from 'traditional' strictures that require exclusive devotion to rice.

Increasingly, Diola families invest in schooling for their children and pin their hopes for the future on their children's academic success. But in Guinea-Bissau, school is a fragile thing to pin one's hopes to. Some unexpected hurdles have complicated the practice of sending adolescent girls to schools outside the village: most have come back as pregnant drop-outs. Meanwhile, boys' studies are often interrupted by political turmoil or lack of economic wherewithal, and as they wait around in the capital for a resumption they not only cannot contribute their much-needed labour back home but also become far more likely to lead precarious lives, particularly in a nation where drug trafficking is ever more entrenched and offers one of the only viable economic alternatives to an arduous (and food-insecure) rural life and a paralyzed (and unfulfilled) postsecondary school urban life.

All of these strategies reflect efforts among the Diola to confront their collective dilemma: who are we without our rice? For now, Diola are hungry – some of them literally so, as they struggle to feed themselves and their families; others more metaphorically, as they search for new paths to social security through schooling, new religious institutions and escape. Comprehending this hunger as it connects the physical body to the social body contributes to our understanding of the complex dynamics of agrarian life. But beyond a mere academic exercise, this understanding has implications for development policies and practices targeted at Diola and other agrarian populations on the Upper Guinea Coast and

beyond. The interpenetration of rice across all social domains requires any development response – particularly in increasingly food-insecure regions – to take into account the totalizing quality of rice agriculture. The concomitant challenge for scholars is not just to articulate this complexity, but to do so while pragmatically engaging both the anxieties of present-day rice farmers and an agricultural development discourse that is disproportionately focused on efficiency and quantity.

Part Two: The Institutional History of Rice Science and Agricultural Development

The outlook on the future of rice in West Africa must, of course, go hand in hand with a historical view of the decreasing self-sufficiency of what was once called the Rice Coast, which leads to an examination of the shift from staple to cash crops during the colonial era in Africa, and the continued de-emphasis on agricultural development in the postcolonial period. Once defined by its abundant rice production, the Upper Guinea Coast has seen a dramatic increase in rice imports over the past half century. Colonial policies shifted African agricultural efforts away from food crops for local sustenance towards cash crops for European consumption. Newly independent African nations in the 1960s and 1970s declared their intention to attain self-sufficiency in food production, framing such a goal as a pragmatic approach to meet the demands of population growth and address Africa's marginal position in the international market on the one hand, and as a political and symbolic reversal of the colonial project on the other. But since independence, the increased influence of the cash economy, combined with rapid demographic shifts and a concomitant focus on urban development, have conspired to keep rural development efforts in a marginalized position vis-à-vis large-scale improvement schemes, and food imports have only increased. The trend of importing basic staples, especially rice, accelerated rapidly in the early 1970s owing to two main factors: the Sahelian drought, and the availability of cheaper rice on the international market due to surplus yields in Asia – the fruit of the new intensive approaches and high-yield seed varieties of the Green Revolution. Thus, in the independence era, 'the amount of rice imported into West Africa increased from 276,000 tons/year in 1960–1964 to 496,000 tons/year in 1970–1974, an increase of 80%, at a time when total world rice exports were unchanged' (Aw 1978: 71). Despite Guinea-Bissau's stated commitment to boost rice self-sufficiency (Da Silva 1978), its rice imports have steadily increased since independence (Temudo 2011).[7]

To answer post-independence Africa's call for self-sufficiency in rice production, the West African Rice Development Association (WARDA), based in Monrovia, Liberia, was established in 1971 and later joined the Consultative Group for International Agricultural Research (CGIAR). WARDA, one of several agri-

cultural research and development centres dedicated to improving the yields of African farmers, was the only one focused exclusively on rice. Since its establishment in 1971, WARDA has been a moveable feast, relocating from Liberia to Côte d'Ivoire to Mali and finally to Benin in response to the eruption of violent conflicts across this swath of West Africa. In 2009 it officially changed its name to Africa Rice Centre (AfricaRice). Tracing WARDA's movements across West Africa, as well as its shifting position within the wider world of international agricultural development, would illuminate much about the politics of postcolonial development in West Africa, although such an exploration is beyond the scope of this chapter.

Though conscious of the particularities of the environmental, political and cultural factors that condition rural development work in West Africa, WARDA largely follows the model of other agricultural research and development entities by focusing on the technical aspects of growing rice. The characteristic approach of agricultural development since the Green Revolution, and even before, has been to apply the latest innovations in agricultural science – especially plant breeding, fertilizers and irrigation – to impoverished rural communities across the world, and move agricultural production from sustenance to surplus to sale. Generally couched in the development discourse of poverty eradication and food security, the goals are primarily quantitative – higher yields, more crop per drop – and even though the latest iteration of the Green Revolution for Africa has incorporated the language of sustainability and gender into its rhetoric, the creation of high-yield seeds continues to be the holy grail of rural development.

WARDA's chief contribution in this vein has been the development of New Rice for Africa (NERICA) varieties – the first successful hybrids of *Oryza sativa* and *Oryza glaberrima* – which are being distributed to rice cultivating populations across the continent. NERICA was first named 'wide crossing' to highlight the achievement of bringing together two rice species from widely divergent sources (Walsh 2001). It also reflects a shift in attitudes towards African indigenous rice, long considered inferior and marginal by rice breeding programmes. As Walsh explains, looking back on several decades of rice breeding efforts, WARDA scientists realized that their gains had been limited by the concentration on imported grains, so they began to 'reclaim *glaberrima*' – analysing the long-ignored indigenous rice species to see what could be learned from its long history and adaptation to West African conditions (Walsh 2001). A senior plant geneticist at WARDA described the process as 'time consuming, but … worth doing because eventually we are going to get an interspecific hybrid that will combine important traits between *glaberrima* and *sativa*' (Walsh 2001: 65). And it did indeed pay off, at least in terms of scientific recognition, when WARDA won the prestigious King Baudouin International Agriculture Research Award for NERICA in 2000. Hopes began to soar regarding the possibility of revitalizing rice production across the continent.

In some senses, NERICA brings the epic journey of rice full circle. It is now generally accepted that *Oryza sativa* and *Oryza glaberrima* shared a common progenitor, and that the genus *Oryza* originated on the Gondwanaland supercontinent before becoming widely distributed across the tropics. From this image of a common origin in a geologically conjoined world, followed by a long history of independent domestication and cultivation to the point of attempted crosses between the two species – *O. sativa* and *O. glaberrima* – that proved sterile, and to a subsequent 'colonization' of African rice by the Asian variety in *glaberrima*'s homeland, we have finally circled back to a conjoining (though of a different kind, conjured in the laboratory) that brings Asia and Africa together again in the microcosm of a single grain, rhetorically touted as the 'best of Africa mixed with the best of Asia', on which hopes of feeding a hungry world are pinned. 'The NERICA rice varieties,' states a recent comprehensive publication on rice, 'offer great hope to the next generation in Africa' (Badawi et al. 2010: 404).

It is precisely this hope that is fuelling a major set of international development initiatives directed squarely at rural Africa: the New Green Revolution for Africa. The remainder of this chapter will explore some of the premises, programmes and players that constitute this reincarnation of the Green Revolution.[8] Drawing on the previous sections that developed a Maussian understanding of rice in Diola and other agrarian societies, I will outline some of my concerns about this new – and rapidly expanding – trend in development policy and practice for postcolonial Africa.

The recent revitalized focus on agriculture is framed as a corrective to the largely failed urban-based rapid-modernization approach that has dominated international donor policy and practice for many decades. Spearheaded by former UN Secretary General Kofi Annan and funded by philanthropy giants such as the Gates Foundation, the architects and planners of the New Green Revolution for Africa seek to fulfil Africa's post-independence promise of self-sufficiency and turn Africa's image around from a 'basket case to a breadbasket' (Cartridge and Leraand 2006: 109).

Gates programme officers and Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) officials speak enthusiastically about this New Green Revolution's potential to succeed in Africa, where so many other development efforts have failed (AGRA-Alliance 2014). In one AGRA plant geneticist's recent summation: 'For a long time, I don't think we knew how to solve Africa's agricultural problems. But the answer is a second green revolution' (Rieff 2008: 30). African Green Revolution planners have attended to some of the more egregious errors of the last Green Revolution and integrated some general changes in public consciousness and development practice since the 1960s and 1970s into its goals and methods. For instance, far more attention is paid to environmentally sustainable practices, the stated objective of focusing on women and the stated intention to 'learn from farmers'. Almost every document and speech on the Green Revolution in Africa

is careful to point out the 'specifically African' challenges in undertaking such efforts, often emphasizing Africa's 'diversity' and 'complexity' of seeds, soil and climate. Other 'uniquely African' challenges are often compiled into a laundry list featuring drought, global warming, water shortages, lack of finance, local conflicts, political neglect, unfavourable trade conditions, unstable governments, fragile economies and infrastructure, technological stagnation, a weak private sector, the HIV/AIDS epidemic, a harsh and often inhospitable climate and environment, and low levels of foreign investment and aid. Despite this long (albeit incomplete) list and the repeated recognition that Africa's challenges are 'extraordinarily complex and profoundly different' from those that confronted Asia and Latin America, the core principles and models of the previous Green Revolution remain intact for the 'genuinely African' Green Revolution: high-yield seeds, better and more fertilizer, access to markets (AGRA-Alliance 2009).

I am concerned about this substantial investment in Green Revolution projects in Africa on a number of levels. On the surface, I am hopeful that renewed attention to rural Africans could be beneficial, especially given the increasing challenges I presented at the beginning of this essay and the long-standing neglect of African smallholders in national, international and NGO development priorities. But I am worried that much of the New Green Revolution rhetoric echoes some of the more problematic (and ultimately dangerous) assumptions of past Green Revolutions and other attempts at agricultural change in Africa and elsewhere.

At the most basic level, African Green Revolution documents tend to treat rural development in Africa as a tabula rasa and demonstrate very little concern with (or even knowledge of) the abundant analyses and attempted (and largely failed) interventions into African rural poverty in the past. Only negligibly do they acknowledge the wealth of scholarship – concentrated in the 1980s – on how post-World War II Africa lost its capacity to feed itself, and more generally on how larger colonial and postcolonial international economic and political systems were among the causes of Africa's current agricultural problems. Quite the contrary, leaders of the New Green Revolution come across as impatient with such 'background information'. Jeffrey Sachs and Pedro Sanchez of the Earth Institute – called on by AGRA to develop some of the intellectual muscle for the African Green Revolution – have continually pressed for urgent action rather than deliberate and methodical discussion. Sachs emphasized recently that 'Africa needs its Green Revolution and it can't wait. Africa can feed itself if farmers get the inputs they need – what theory are we waiting for? … We have the tools to get the job done' (Cartridge and Leraand 2006: 122).

This general impatience is reminiscent of an earlier era of agricultural development work. Buttressed by the belief that rapid widespread action not bogged down by generative criticism or participatory methodologies was justified, given the otherwise imminent starvation of a rapidly increasing population, previous

agricultural development experts were dismissive of the particularity and complexity of farmers' expressed needs and desires, often retorting that 'beggars ought not to be choosers' (Richards 1985: 124). But rural Africa is littered with the failed schemes of such hurried approaches to agricultural development.

Teleological Development, Again

Besides failing to do their homework and dismissing critical perspectives, African Green Revolution adherents repeat a faulty teleological understanding of development. The premise behind Green Revolution programmes is that a productive agricultural sector will lead to national economic growth. This is often bolstered with historical evidence from eighteenth-century England, nineteenth-century Japan and twentieth-century India (Hazell and Diao 2005; Båge 2008). Kofi Annan emphasized this point in his speech to the delegates at the 2007 African Green Revolution conference in Oslo: 'Virtually no country in history has achieved economic progress and improved the lives of its people without first advancing agriculture. That certainly applies to our continent' (Annan 2007). The proceedings from the first Oslo conference put it even more starkly: Africa is 'Trapped' (in poverty) and in 'Trouble' (cannot feed its people), and its 'Time has come. After decades of failed attempts at economic and social development, agriculture has been declared the engine of economic growth and poverty reduction in Africa … Africa has no time to waste' (Cartridge and Leraand 2006: 28; capital letters in original).

The argument, then, is that every successful society has had to pass through some kind of agricultural transformation, and that previous development efforts in Africa failed because they played leapfrog over agriculture and attended to industrial and urban development before their time. In the 2006 Oslo proceedings, a caption underneath a photograph of two African men driving a tractor through a large cultivated field reads: 'Agriculture is commonly considered a locomotive for economic growth in Africa…' (Cartridge and Leraand 2006: 42). Africa remains 'a predominantly agricultural continent', and 'neglecting this overarching importance of agriculture' accounts for Africa's status as the worst-off continent on the planet (ibid.: 41). So, the thinking goes, if you get agriculture right, the rest (ending hunger and poverty, modernization, economic growth, etc.) will follow. New Green Revolution advocates criticize previous development efforts that have tried to 'impose a post-agricultural revolution strategy on Africa before its own agricultural revolution has happened. … The lessons from Asia and elsewhere seem clear: Africa needs a concerted effort to accelerate smallholder-led agricultural development … only then can the transition to industrialization be expected to succeed' (Hazell and Diao 2005: 25).

This teleological approach reinforces an evolutionary development narrative in which each society must pass through the phases that supposedly more 'advanced' ones withstood on the road to progress. Not only is this historically

inaccurate, but it misrepresents Africa as an entire continent 'not ready, not yet, not quite' for other kinds of development efforts. Instead of recognizing a 'full house' of variation (Ferguson 1999), New Green Revolution leaders insist that 'as African countries develop and diversify, the other sectors will become important sources of tradables output and agriculture's role as the primary engine of growth will diminish. But other sectors are not yet ready to play that role on the scale required' (Hazell and Diao 2005: 29). Africa must therefore stick to the linear progression of social change: agriculture first, then industry. 'As countries develop and labor becomes scarcer relative to land and capital, [this leads to] a *natural* transition towards larger farms and an exodus of small farm workers to towns and nonfarm jobs' (Hazell and Diao 2005: 29; emphasis added).

There is nothing 'natural' about this transition. Such thinking not only repeats outmoded clichés of the move from traditional to modern, rural to urban, subsistence to monetized economy, but also ignores a recent trend in the so-called advanced or 'post-agricultural' societies that challenges this linear development model. Faced with increasing evidence that 'natural' transitions from small-scale farming to large-scale industrial and commercial agribusiness contribute significantly to environmental degradation, food scares and public health epidemics of obesity and other chronic diseases, Europeans and North Americans are ever more dissatisfied with large-scale food production. A spreading movement to return to alternative agriculture is visible in the growth of community-supported agriculture, the Slow Food movement, locavores, the celebrity-like popularity of Michael Pollan and other such trends. Perhaps this is an agricultural revolution in the other sense of the word; that is, coming full circle to an appreciation of local tastes and practices, environmentally sensitive farming and other characteristics that have long been prominent among the rural African peasantry.

Means and Ends; Techniques and Contexts

Another problematic aspect of the 'agriculture-led economic development' paradigm is that it subsumes agriculture as a *means* to a more desirable *end,* denigrating the value of agriculture in and of itself. A more productive agricultural sector supposedly paves the way to a post-agricultural world (as if such a thing could really exist). As a USAID official noted: 'If a process like an agriculture revolution works, it explicitly gets people to leave agriculture. It does! You are creating jobs that are more attractive…' (quoted in Cartridge and Leraand 2006: 103). To be sure, many farmers in Africa and around the world have hopes for their children that include nonfarm jobs. But why preclude the possibility that agriculture itself can be desirable? The assumption that agriculture is something to be left behind on the road to progress – something you work your way out of – reinforces agriculture's low status on the evolutionary ladder and recapitulates the very image that for so long made rural smallholder concerns look 'unsexy' to global development agendas (a view that New Green Revolution advocates claim

they are trying to reverse). From my own work among Diola rice cultivators, it is clear that although Diola farmers often complain about their declining capacity to sustain their households, they are proud of their continued hard work in the rice paddies. Even those with supposedly more desirable jobs, like teachers, identify first and foremost (and proudly) as farmers. By regarding food production as 'unspectacular', Green Revolution proponents continue to 'misunderstand the nature of both the agriculture and the politics of communities where food production is a major interest' (Richards 1985: 116).

Agriculture is not only devalued as a means to an end but reduced to a set of techniques, as something to be tinkered with and fixed. Although not sexy to developers, agriculture is like sex in the Foucauldian sense of the care of the self: it is a practice that can be practised (i.e. improved). With the right inputs – science and technology, seeds and fertilizers – agriculture can be transformed. The overriding approach of the Green Revolution (past and present) is primarily biological and technological, and operates under the assumption that agricultural processes can be extracted from their political and social contexts. This view is encoded in Green Revolution discourse, institutions and practices. Most of its leaders – donors and practitioners alike – are economists or agricultural experts (or both); there are few if any social scientists (let alone anthropologists, let alone small-scale farmers) in their ranks.[9] Their approach to agricultural transformation ignores the long history of social and political circumstances that help explain why African agriculture is experiencing difficulties, even as it occludes a picture of agriculture embedded in complex modes of social organization, moral economies, arrangements of power and religious beliefs and practices. As we have seen for Diola – and as has been documented for other agrarian groups – agricultural work is not simply a means of sustenance but is integrally tied to conceptions of personhood, social relations, ritual obligations and collective cultural identity. Tinkering with any piece of their cultivation practices has significant ramifications for all of these realms.

Agriculture is necessarily a biological and social process, but the Green Revolution's exclusive emphasis on research and technology sets the social side of this equation aside. This bias is built into the elitist research culture of the Green Revolution. In the Asian and Latin American iterations, International Agricultural Research Centers concentrated the brightest talents in a single place equipped with the best research facilities, and in so doing removed them from exactly the geographical and sociological contexts where they would be most connected to the needs and realities of farmers, and in which they were meant to implement their scientific discoveries. Such practices are replicated in Gates's support of Cornell and other seed research centres and even showcased on AGRA's website in images of African scientists surrounded by the accoutrements of modern, high-tech scientific legitimacy: white lab coats, safety goggles and pristine laboratories lined with neatly labelled beakers. But these environments insulate Green

Revolution practitioners from the real-time agricultural environment and on-farm knowledge, practice and experience (both biological and social). They also obfuscate the social and political aspects of agrarian change (e.g. land reform, the social organization of labour and national price setting, to name just a few). This may have the unfortunate consequence of repeating the problems and failures of previous applications of 'pure science' to agricultural challenges.

Beyond seed science, one of the innovations New Green Revolution leaders are most excited about is the development of a corps of agro-dealers to bring high-yield seeds and improved fertilizer – what used to be called the biological package – to isolated, rural farmers.[10] Replacing the infamous extension agent as the travelling salesman of the Green Revolution, these agro-dealers would be culled from the existing merchants who peddle their wares in outlying villages, thus solving (or at least circumventing) the problems presented by the lack of an African transportation infrastructure. But the assumption that the existing petty-merchant class can sell new seeds and other agricultural products (and even train farmers how to use them) exposes a serious misunderstanding of social and ethnic relations in parts of rural Africa. In the Upper Guinea Coast, farming populations generally regard the petty traders who would be recruited into the agro-dealer corps with deep misgivings and mistrust, and certainly do not recognize them for their knowledge of agriculture. I was often told a well-known rural legend about sneaky peddlers (they are always Fula in the Guinea-Bissau version of this story) who sold glass marbles to gullible rice cultivators, claiming that if they were planted and tended to, they would grow into coveted glass bottles after the rainy season. This anecdote is often told to highlight the naiveté of 'traditional' and 'backward' farmers, or to explain the roots of the enduring animosity between landowning farmers and itinerant merchants, or to prove that such merchants are inherently untrustworthy – or, usually, some combination of these. Many similar stories abound, testifying that relations between farmers and would-be agro-dealers are already tense. Any investment of funding and expectations in agro-dealers as the conduits through which newly developed high-yield seeds, fertilizer and agricultural know-how will reach rural farmers and transform agricultural productivity further exposes the naiveté – or at least the lack of attention to on-the-ground social relations – of Green Revolution architects.

Scientific and Indigenous Knowledge

One of the key resolutions of the first African Green Revolution conference in Oslo is to ensure 'targeted research and transfer of Science and Technology to farmers' (Oslo Conference 2006; capital letters in original). Other resolutions, redressing previous Green Revolution gaps, include commitments to crop diversity and the role of women in agriculture. But the emphasis is unmistakably on bringing science and technology to the 'unknowing' African smallholder. Again, such an approach carries forward the perspective in which African farmers occupy

an earlier stage of evolutionary history, and claims that 'the key to agricultural development in Africa lies in "technology transfer" – the importation of "appropriate" agricultural inputs from tropical regions held to be more "advanced" on the evolutionary scale' (Richards 1985: 43).

Along with the prejudicial implications of such a view, the continued belief that laboratory science leads agricultural innovation is countered by countless examples of agricultural researchers reinventing traditional African agriculture by, for instance, 'discovering' the value of West African farming techniques like 'bush burning', integrated use of valley and upland holdings, intercropping and land-rotation fallowing. Science has often followed such innovations rather than led them. As Paul Richards notes, 'high technology' initiatives throughout the colonial and postcolonial era had minimal and often counterproductive impact, and their failures were remedied – in numerous cases from Nigeria, Sierra Leone, Liberia, the Gambia and Senegal – by reinstating local cultivation practices (Richards 1985; see also Richards et al. 2009; Nuijten et al. 2009; Offei et al. 2010).

The reincarnation of the Green Revolution for Africa has attended to some of the previous biases against indigenous knowledge in its commitment to 'listen to farmers'. As an AGRA programme officer states,

> There is also a lot to be learned from the farmer. You develop ideas about what you think the farmer should do to solve their problem, but maybe that is not the farmer's problem.… So, for us agriculturists, we may be telling the farmers what chemical to use or how to control the storage pests or how we can develop a resistant variety, but the farmers know what they have been doing and they may have abandoned a method that works.… So if you have an interaction between you and the farmer, you will come to learn what the farmer really wants. (AGRA-Alliance 2009)

While these lessons learned from the hubris of the previous Green Revolution reflect what I believe are sincere intentions to incorporate indigenous knowledge and smallholders' concerns into agricultural development projects (even though, as mentioned above, other dynamics of Green Revolution culture and practice militate against this very process), such a bland and general intention to 'learn from farmers' exposes yet another naïve assumption on the part of Green Revolution agro-economists: that indigenous knowledge is ripe for the picking, readily available to whichever plant geneticist or grant portfolio manager might ask about it. But one of the reasons behind the continuing stereotype and misrepresentation of the 'conservative risk-averse farmer' is that agrarian communities have 'often misled outsiders into thinking that not much was going on' (Richards 1985: 111). It is often to farmers' advantage to keep a low profile and maintain the image of a subsistence backwater: such a projected image fends off the tax

collector and others interested in taking a share of what is often a thriving trade in foodstuffs (see Richards 1985).

Even more so, some agrarian societies have deeply ingrained formal and informal communicative strategies that make access to agricultural knowledge – or really any relevant knowledge regarding farmers' circumstances – extremely difficult to obtain. Various rice farming groups expend a great deal of time and energy managing knowledge about themselves and about the natural and supernatural world (Ferme 2001; Sarró 2009; Davidson 2010). Their commitment to a particular scheme of information flow – based largely on secrecy, evasion and restraint – challenges even the most culturally sensitive development policies and practices, and certainly makes 'learning from farmers' more complicated than the AGRA programme officer would lead us believe.

Conclusions

My goal in outlining some of my concerns with the New Green Revolution for Africa is not to dismiss efforts to reach out to African farmers or, more broadly, address pressing problems of entrenched rural poverty in Africa. Rather, I want to point out some ways in which current well-funded, powerful efforts to shape the agenda for accomplishing these aims might benefit from a closer analysis of the assumptions underlying such endeavours, whether encased in the rhetorical, institutional or programmatic aspects of African Green Revolution initiatives. Although the language is more sophisticated, these New Green Revolution approaches smuggle in many of the last Green Revolution's teleological and evolutionary models of social change, and – despite regular references to 'local knowledge' and 'political will' – continue to treat agriculture as a set of techniques outside complex social, political and religious contexts.

As Pedro Sanchez from the Earth Institute confirmed: 'The African Green Revolution is not a proposal, it's on, it's happening now. Agriculture is back on donors' and governments' agendas and it is being acknowledged as one of the key factors in Africa's future' (Cartridge and Leraand 2006: 109). Given that the train has already left the station, the question then becomes how anthropologists and others concerned about the more problematic aspects of Green Revolutionary practice can engage it constructively – particularly when interlocutors are resistant to criticism and eager to claim the moral high ground of poverty eradication – without being either relegated to the role of naysayers or mired in the 'ineffective particularities of ethnographic detail' that continue to make anthropologists 'bystanders in the wider arena of discussions about "Africa"' (Ferguson 2006: 3). Will social scientists once again be consigned to the task of documenting the validity of indigenous knowledge for an audience that is enamoured with (and has the resources and power to bring about) change through technology, 'pure science' and market access? How can we best bring anthropological and historical

knowledge to bear on what will be significant changes – and perhaps major opportunities or high-stakes follies – for rural Africans?

The story of rice and rice-oriented societies on the Upper Guinea Coast invites us to take a very long view of historical change. Rice was domesticated 3,500 years ago as an innovative response to a drying climate. Mangrove rice cultivation in particular represents an ingenious way to engineer an otherwise inhospitable landscape. Even the pressures of the Atlantic slave trade catalysed – in some cases – the consolidation of otherwise dispersed populations and led to an increase in output of rice. As Ohnuki-Tierney notes for the Japanese, 'rice paddies objectify *time*' (1993: 133). They evoke seasonality in the rhythms of planting and harvesting, they speak to cyclical patterns of rain and drought, and they express the history and memories of ancestors in their lineage-based tenure and their well-maintained ridges. What they will look like and represent in the future is unclear, especially given the odds of climate change, geopolitical marginality and a skewed globalized economy.

As stated above, one of the goals of the African Green Revolution is to turn Africa from a 'basket case to a breadbasket' (Cartridge and Leraand 2006: 109). Rather than being 'genuinely African', this aims to make Africa more like Iowa. An immediate countermeasure would involve shifting our attention away from old chestnuts like the impressive 'adaptive' strategies of rural smallholders and towards a better understanding of the conditions in which agricultural innovation thrives, by building on Paul Richards's call to 'stimulate vigorous "indigenous science" and "indigenous technology"' (Richards 1985: 12). But a next step would involve moving beyond a science narrowly conceived on the basis of the origin of the scientist. A 'genuinely African' Green Revolution is not about enabling Africans to occupy positions in pristine laboratories, but it could be about reconceptualizing the character of science itself.

The nature of the science that has undergirded Green Revolutions from eighteenth-century Europe to 1970s Latin America and Asia is a classic example of Scott's (1998) notion of high modernism in science. It is characterized not only by its constant confidence that science and technology (and resolute reliance on the expertise of scientists and bureaucrats) will attend to problems in the natural and social world, but also by its indifference to cultural, historical and social complexities and particularities. By narrowly focusing on a single problem (agricultural production), black-boxing uncertainty and complexity, and generally overlooking or externalizing negative by-products, high-modernist science has continually shown itself to be irrelevant, inapplicable and ultimately resulting in failure more often than not (see S. Brooks 2010). It is also a deeply antipolitical approach to agricultural development (Ferguson 1994). If we opt not to follow that script for another chapter in Africa, perhaps Scott's call for a '*métis*' vision of practical knowledge points us in the right direction. The experiences of Diola rice farmers and the totalizing quality of rice in their societies remind us that Af-

rican agricultural transformation requires a commitment to engage in agriculture not as a means to an end, but as a practice integrally linked to and informed by culture, ecology, politics, social organization and other dimensions of agrarian life not readily encapsulated by the tunnel-vision goals of a high-modernist and antipolitical approach to development.

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Notes

1. This essay is a revised version of an article published in June 2012 as 'Basket Cases and Breadbaskets: Sacred Rice and Agricultural Development in Postcolonial Africa', *Culture, Agriculture, Food and Environment (CAFÉ)* 34(1): 15–32.
2. Many rice-cultivating people consider rice sacred in different ways (see Grist 1959; Ohnuki-Tierney 1993; United Nations Office at Geneva 2004).
3. The dynamics around shifting levirate practices and the status of widows are quite complex, and I do not have room in this chapter to detail them. For now, what is important is to acknowledge that decreasing rice supplies play an important part in the changes in social organization concerning widows.
4. McCann's (2005) study of maize provides further evidence in support of the observation that a hallmark feature of African agriculture is its loyalty to a single crop, even one of recent provenance.
5. I am inspired by, and hopefully building upon, such works. But my similar focus on a single crop – rice, in this case – does not lead me to the same type of dramatic, far-reaching arguments about the transformation of civilizations and geopolitical order across multiple continents. Although my background discussion of rice – its origins, travels, widespread use and future expectations – does touch upon some of these themes, my aims are perhaps less ambitious and more intimate by comparison.
6. Eltis et al. argue against Judith Carney's 'black rice' thesis (and against Peter Wood's and Daniel Littlefield's work, on which Carney's builds) by insisting that 'there is no compelling evidence that African slaves transferred whole agricultural systems to the New World; nor were they the primary players in creating and maintaining rice regimes in the Americas.… Furthermore, a close look at the slave trade from an Atlantic perspective suggests no evidence that the rice culture of South Carolina, Georgia and Amazonia was any more dependent on skills imported from Africa than were its tobacco and sugar counterparts in the Chesapeake, the Caribbean, and Brazil. The evolving transatlantic connections, the age and sex composition of the slave trade, the broad shifts over time in transatlantic slaving patterns, and the structure of slave prices are all largely explained without reference to a supposed desire on the part of rice planters for slaves with rice-growing expertise developed in Africa' (Eltis et al. 2007: 1335, 1357).
7. As Temudo (2011: 309) notes, 'In recent years, rice imports in the sub-region have been increasing from an annual growth rate of 5.54 per cent in 1991–2000 up to 10.51 per

cent in 2001–2005. Despite research and development efforts focused on the selection and diffusion of modern varieties, rice consumption has been increasing faster than production and the self-sufficiency ratio decreased from 0.78 in the 1990s to 0.58 from 2001 to 2005'.

8. Much of the agricultural research on tropical food crops for the Latin American and Asian Green Revolution was carried out under the auspices of an international research network coordinated by CGIAR and funded largely by the Rockefeller and Ford Foundations, with additional financing from the World Bank and multinational corporations. Known as the CG System, it comprised ten International Agricultural Research Centers, some of which are continuing their work with new injections of financing and purpose for the African Green Revolution.

9. See Cernea (2005) for an excellent analysis of the 'uphill battle for social research' in CGIAR centres, as well as the lively discussion ('Special Section' 2006; Fernando 2007) in the wake of Cernea's article.

10. See Koopman (2012) for another critique of this approach, as well as other problematic aspects of AGRA's efforts. See also Mittal and Moore (2009) for a report on African farmers' responses to AGRA.

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Transnational and Local Models of Non-Refoulement

Youth and Women in the Moral Economy of Patronage in Postwar Liberia and Sierra Leone

William P. Murphy

Introduction

Survival and self-protection often require an acute recognition of the sociopolitical structures creating suffering. This social fact is especially significant for people displaced during a war – that is, people displaced either within their country (IDPs) or outside the country (refugees).[1] War-affected groups face the challenges of rebuilding social lives when they return to exited communities, whether villages, towns and neighbourhoods or the national community as a whole. (E.g. a refugee might return to the national community but avoid her local community of origin because of the oppression of harsh patriarchy.) Returnees must confront the structural problems that led to the violent conditions precipitating their exit in the first place.

'Return' produces a critical sociopolitical moment for scrutinizing social injustices existing before, during and after a war – thereby creating a special postconflict 'public sphere' in Habermas's (1989 [1962], 1974) sense of citizen discourse and reasoning about political institutions and their consequences for socioeconomic inequality. Even as returnees face the constraints of an impoverished postwar social and economic infrastructure, hopeful possibilities arise for creating future institutions with greater fairness and opportunity. Alternatively, for the entrepreneurs of power and domination, the period of 'return' and the process of rebuilding the social fabric of a war-wracked country offer opportunities to reimpose the political privileges and economic monopoly of a governing elite of local and national 'big men'.[2] Capturing international humanitarian resources for postconflict rehabilitation programmes, for example, is one core strategy for rebuilding patronage power and wealth (see Hoffman 2004 on the

effect of humanitarian aid on war strategies in the Liberian and Sierra Leone civil wars, and Fanthrope 2003 on postwar strategies; cf. Chambers 1979 for the effect of humanitarian aid on refugee strategies generally).

The logic of rebuilding 'big man' patronage structures can be described with a poignant phrase that Labonte (2011) used to summarize the social anxieties of returnees in the case of Sierra Leone, namely, the problem of 'elite capture' of post-conflict governance and wealth.[3] The impoverishment of the postconflict political economy intensifies social dependency on and subordination to 'big man' institutional structures (including the reinforcing structures and ideologies of patriarchy and gerontocracy) and creates special incentives for 'big man' to build new pyramids of patron domination and client dependency in the new spaces of postconflict opportunity (on the theoretical logic of patronage pyramids see Martin 2009: Chap. 6). Christensen (2012), for example, in her study of patronage strategies in local postconflict government by former military commanders and their clients, concluded by offering the important generalization that postconflict state formation and governance in Sierra Leone largely involves 'the redirecting of militarized patrimonial networks for post-war politico-economic purposes' (Christensen 2012: 74–75; see also Christensen and Utas 2007 and Utas 2012: 19).

This essay thus begins with a specific social anxiety about elite capture that is expressed in the local moral perspective on '*non-refoulement*' – the right of not returning – and articulated by those worried about their vulnerability to injustices stemming from the patronage capture of resources when they return to postconflict communities. To illustrate this anxiety, consider a song recorded on cassette by a young Liberian band that I heard on the streets of Monrovia in 2004, only a year after President Taylor had left for exile in Nigeria and during the beginning of the new interim government. The song poetically and musically critiqued the lived experience of the postconflict crisis of reasserted patronage power and privileges. A key phrase in it went 'the only thing that has changed is the silence of the guns' (to paraphrase what I heard). This referred to the end of the civil war in 2003 when two rebel groups were fighting President Charles Taylor, who himself had started the original, 'first' civil war in December 1989 against then President of Liberia Samuel Doe.

After the phrase, 'the only thing that has changed is the silence of the guns', the singer explains that big man politics hasn't changed: the big men still have the fancy cars, fancy houses and beautiful girlfriends. The big men referred to were members of the interim government – including former leaders of the rebel groups – who now were in positions of power. This song reflects a central theme in postconflict discourse, namely, the danger that big man patronage politics will be reproduced in the postconflict period of social reconstruction, repeating old institutional problems of inequality and the suffering they cause.

The relationship between social structure and suffering is captured in the idea of 'structural violence' (Farmer 2003), but the broader methodological principle

is that the structural properties complicit in social suffering, such as the institution of patronage, are mediated and identified in the cultural vocabulary of social discourse, including the language of protest songs. This principle derives from social theory's insistent task of trying to find 'a better way for the vocabulary of the actors to be heard loud and clear', to borrow Latour's (2005: 30) phrase. The analytical value of this 'vocabulary' in the study of social injustice rests on the ontological fact that morality and law are 'situated in a linguistically structured form of life' (Habermas 2003: 37).

Much of the cultural vocabulary of social injustice in postconflict Liberia and Sierra Leone focuses on failures in the moral economy of patronage reciprocity. These failures, in turn, are seen by victims as justifying choices whether or not to return to, or to exit, particular local or national communities. In international law, these choices are interpreted in terms of the right of non-refoulement – one's right not to be forced to return to a community one exited because of persecution. The argument here treats this international legal norm as a heuristic for thinking about local social injustices faced by postconflict returnees. Conversely, it also seeks to give ethnographic specificity to this international ideal by analysing a specific institutional form producing those injustices, namely, 'big man' patronage.

Human Rights and Local Justice

Many scholars of this West African region have recognized the special political space of postconflict in Liberia and Sierra Leone as creating an intense interaction between human rights discourse and local moral idioms about injustice (e.g. Archibald and Richards 2002; Ferme and Hoffman 2004; Fanthrope 2005; Shaw 2005, 2010; Allie 2008; Boas and Hatloy 2008; Kelsall 2009; Sesay and Suma 2009; Anders 2012; Abramowitz and Moran 2012). This essay addresses similar questions, but in terms of a specific international legal norm: the right of non-refoulement, as well as the related right to exit a community.[4] Having the 'right to exit' a community because of various forms of persecution is the reverse of 'non-refoulement,' the right not to be forcibly returned to communities where persecution continues to be a danger.

It is characteristic of human rights thinking (as well as the anthropological imagination) to manifest concern for those who are politically vulnerable to persecution: 'Human rights … articulate the relationship between individuals and groups within a community and their relationship with others, particularly those with power and authority' (Clapham 2007: 161). A key difference, however, separates the transnational legal emphasis on crimes of individuals from local cultural assessments of unjust consequences of particular institutional and organizational forms. Kelsall makes a related point at the conclusion of his study of the war crimes tribunal of the Special Court for Sierra Leone: 'international law doctrines were unable properly to capture the nature of authority in Sierra Le-

one' (Kelsall 2009: 260). Victims of social injustices are often better sociologists than international lawyers whose gaze is typically narrowed by legal doctrine to a focus on individual misdeeds. A lawyer cannot indict in court, or imprison, an institution. The transnational legal lens of focusing on individual accountability thus limits outsiders' ability to 'see' institutional forms of local injustices relevant to the human rights of exiting and non-refoulement.[5] Scott's (1998) metaphor of 'seeing' to represent a horizon of limited understanding arising from nation-state perspectives applies also to the transnational legal lens.

> In refugee law and policy, there are often 'systematic reasons for igno-rance' in the form of oversights and biases towards refugees, for political or other reasons (e.g., urban bias towards rural refugees) – creating 'what the eye does not see' by overlooking the social strategies, institutional constraints and lived experience of those coping with forced migration. (Chambers 1979: 382)[6]

Nevertheless, in response to unfair aspects of postconflict social life, shared moral and intellectual sympathies can emerge to create a special form of 'value generalization' – between transnational human rights and local cultural idioms – that represents a mutual focus on aspects of unfairness in particular sociopolitical contexts (see Joas 2013: Chap. 6 on the concept of value generalization in social theory, as formulated in the work of Max Weber and Talcott Parsons). This social fact creates the broader ethnographic challenge of examining social spheres of value generalization from the point of view of different social positions in a community, such as youth versus elders, or men versus women. This essay addresses that challenge.

Social Justice for Returnees: Transnational and Local Frames of 'Seeing'[7]

Studies of the intersection of international human rights and local cultural beliefs often contrast 'rights discourse' of international law with other modalities of justice-making, such as reconciliation, communal sharing and mutual care, viewed as characteristic of local cultural practices (see Merry 2006: 133ff.). The analytical emphasis on the ethic of mutual care (and communal sharing) rather than human rights, however, can create a romanticized view of forms of social connectedness between individuals that overlooks the sober ethnographic fact that different forms of social connectedness may be the problem and source of social injustice (Kiss 1999).[8] Moreover, this dichotomy can deflect attention from the manifold cross-cultural ethics of avoiding unfair treatment in various forms of social connectedness, for example, youth talking about the injustices of elders. A more encompassing theory of culture would underscore 'the ways local cultural

practices and beliefs interact with global legal principles and the importance of seeing these in context' (Merry 2006: 133; Goodale and Merry 2007; see also Clarke 2009 on the legal pluralism of micropractices of sociocultural differences in the discourse of rights and justice).

A good example of this interaction is the shared moral spirit manifest in the right to exit and right of non-refoulement. The 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights contains several articles that set out ideas related to the right to exit. Article 13 speaks directly of the right to leave your country, Article 14 identifies the right to find asylum from persecution by moving to another country, Article 15 defines the right to change your nationality and Article 18 speaks of the right to change your religion. This legal concept of 'exiting' has both spatial connotations, in the sense of the right to physically leave one's community, and what might be called existential connotations, in the sense of the right to differentiate yourself in some way from your community's cultural order of beliefs and values.

The right of 'non-refoulement' – the reverse of having a 'right to exit' – has a noteworthy legal history in human rights doctrine and refugee law. The right of refugees 'not to be forcibly returned to countries where they face persecution' on account of race, religion, nationality, social group membership, or political opinion was clarified in international legal conventions on refugees in 1933 and 1951, and further developed as fundamental international jurisprudence in additional legal instruments, such as the Convention against Torture adopted by the United Nations in 1984 and ratified in 1987 (e.g. Adelman and Barkan 2011; Weissbrodt and Hortreiter 1999; for some analyses of African cases, see Kuruk 1999 on Liberian refugees in Ghana, and Virmani 1999 on Uganda).

The legal principle of 'non-refoulement' is an ideal focal point for examining the local/global relationship as it pertains to the life of returnees to a postwar society. Consider, for example, that the legal vocabulary of non-refoulement derives etymologically from the French word 'refouler' ('to send back' or 'to turn away'), but it can also evoke connotations in the Anglo-Saxon language sense of 'foul', that is, as something rotten, unclean, corrupt or offensive to the senses. These English connotations are not justified etymologically, but they stimulate the thought experiment of asking what is socially noxious and unhealthy from the point of view of returnees. The next two sections suggest an answer in the structural form of big man patronage and its moral economy in the postwar politics of Liberia and Sierra Leone.

Patrimonial Patronage in Civil War

Patrimonial politics formed the prewar conditions contributing to the violent conflict in Liberia and Sierra Leone. This political structure was not a sufficient cause of the civil war, but it did provide insurgency leaders with ideological jus-

tification (e.g. the idea of fighting against a corrupt government) and motivate some participants. Meanwhile, the actual day-to-day logic of the violence, in its microdimensions of patrimonial aggrandizement, had more to do with the social control of civilians and territorial resources than with overturning a corrupt, patrimonial government. The civil war was a site where different patrimonial regimes – the government and rebel insurgencies, as well as factionalized rebel groups – battled for this territorial and social control.

The 'crisis of the patrimonial state' is a canonical argument in the literature on causal mechanisms leading to the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone. Some fundamental texts in this scholarly literature (explicitly or implicitly confirming this political pattern) include, to cite just a few from a voluminous list, Abdullah (2004), Bolton (2012), Coulter (2009), Denov (2010), Duyvesteyn (2005), Ellis (1999), Ferme (2001), Gberie (2005), Hoffman (2011), Keen (2005), Kelsall (2009), Jackson (2004), Moran (2006), Murphy (2003), Peters (2011), Pham (2004, 2006), Reno (1995, 1998) and Richards (1996 and 2005a) and Utas (2005a, 2005b, 2012); also see McGovern (2011) on the interrelated civil war in Côte d'Ivoire. The locus classicus for conceptualizing key institutional features of this political form is Weber's (1978: Chap. 12) analytical model of patrimonialism (see Murphy 2010 for an application of this model to Upper Guinea Coast political and economic history, and Murphy 2003 for its application to the rebel regimes). The discretionary, autocratic power of big men in the patrimonial logic of governance is often generalized as a causal mechanism in the logic of the 'failed' or 'weak' state syndrome (see Williams 2011: Chap. 3 on 'neopatrimonialism' in African conflicts).[9]

The broad idea of patrimonial political system can be constructed with ethnographic specificity by imagining a pyramid of nested, dyadic patron/client relations emerging from political strategizing in various social contexts of severe dependency, inequality, economic need and power aggrandizement. In addition, the term 'patrimonial patronage' – patronage in governance structures at different territorial levels (nation, chiefdom, town, village, etc.) – can be used to differentiate practices of 'social patronage' in nongovernmental domains of society, that is, families, households and the variety of social groups in civil society generally (youth gangs, trade unions, etc.).[10] Patronage and clientelism as concrete practices are best conceptualized as sociopolitical strategies (Piattoni 2001), a conception that in turn justifies a method of attending to the language used to evaluate the effectiveness and success – and the morality (fairness or unfairness) – of those strategies in particular social and political contexts.

Ethnographic Sketch

Postwar Liberia and Sierra Leone provide two powerful cases of institutional change and continuity of patrimonial structures resulting from civil war and its

aftermath. The second civil war in Liberia, locally called 'World War II', began in 1999 and opposed two rebel groups – Liberians United for Reconciliation and Democracy, and the Movement for Democracy in Liberia – against the government of Charles Taylor, who in December 1989 had started the first civil war, or 'World War I', with his National Patriotic Front of Liberia insurgency. Taylor became president in 1997 but was exiled to Nigeria in August 2003. His departure came to symbolize the end of both civil wars and later the war crimes and crimes against humanity that characterized the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone. His election in 1997 – contested under the threat of war restarting if he was not elected – and his government rule until his departure in 2003 exemplified the logic of 'elite capture' of national economic resources and political power characteristic of patrimonial systems.

In March 2003 Taylor was indicted by the UN-backed Special Court for Sierra Leone for war crimes and crimes against humanity.[11] In April 2012 in a trial held in The Hague, he was convicted on eleven counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including crimes that had gender and age dimensions such as rape, sexual slavery and use of child soldiers. In May 2012, he was sentenced to fifty years in prison. The civil war in Sierra Leone (declared officially over in 2002) had been started in March 1991, with the support of Charles Taylor, by Foday Sankoh, leader of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF). He died in 2003 before he could be brought to trial by the same Special Court for Sierra Leone, which indicted him on seventeen counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The rebel regimes of both Taylor and Sankoh exemplified the structural vulnerabilities characteristic of 'warlord' patrimonial organizations, such as coercive means of discretionary authority enabling immunity from traditional moral constraints, a system of authority that was fractionalized (and factionalized) by competition among 'big man' warlords, and so forth. The rebel-group domination imposed on captured territories and civilian populations replicated the prewar patrimonial logic and ideology of social control, though with the addition of more extreme coercive means for controlling labour and monopolizing economic resources. The harsh use of subjects for forced labour in these warlord political regimes contributed to the war's immense devastation of local and national infrastructures, and to extensive violence against civilians. Using the words of one young ex-combatant (from a Sierra Leone civil defence force), most civilians, aware of the RUF rebels' predations on civilian lives and property, eventually viewed them as 'just armed bandits' and 'thieves', despite their lofty-sounding revolutionary ideology (quoted in Peters and Richards 1998: 200).

Another major indicator of the devastation and disruption of a civil war is the large-scale movement of refugees and internally displaced people, which creates one of the key analytical problems – and humanitarian challenges – for understanding postconflict societies: namely, the need to understand the socio-

political practices of trying to rehabilitate community life and rebuild physical infrastructures of war-torn villages and towns, and the need to reconcile ex-combatants, both male and female, with their families and communities.[12] Nevertheless, many displaced persons, especially youth and women, have been unwilling to return to their original communities and customary ways of life. Their hesitancy reflects a social and existential crisis of 'institutional doubt' about post-conflict politics (to borrow a term from Habermas 1973: 15).

Analytical Puzzle: The Moral Economy of Patrimonial Patronage

In the political economy of the prewar, civil war and postwar periods in Liberia and Sierra Leone, reciprocal obligations were often defined by a normative order regulating dependency relations with big man patrons within a patrimonial political system. Typically, this cultural order of politics codifies obligations of exchange in which patrons provide economic aid and political protection while clients and subjects provide labour, political loyalty and economic tribute. These obligations and expectations constitute a moral economy of patronage.

The idea of a 'moral economy' – namely, a moral code regulating economic transactions between those with authority and their economic dependents – is most often associated with the work of E.P. Thompson (1971; see also Scott 1976 and Davis 1973; for application to African history, see Austin's 1993 analysis of the moral economy of witchcraft). Thompson's use of the term 'moral economy of the poor' in his historical analysis of food riots in eighteenth-century Britain follows Marx's preoccupation with the critique of and resistance to the injustices of capitalism. This concept seems to turn Weber on his head by focusing on the legitimate use of violence by the poor and less powerful, rather than on the legitimacy of the monopoly of violence by the powerful in a political community. But the idea actually overlaps with Weber's theoretical emphasis on the cultural order of meaning and morality as constitutive of economic transactions (and of legitimate violence). The relationship between morality and economic transactions is clear in Weber's theory of patrimonialism: the traditional moral order places a '"customary" limitation on economic exploitation', and breaches in this customary moral order through 'excessive demands – transcending tradition – could shake their [subjects'] loyalty, which had a merely traditional basis' (Weber (1978: 1010).

A morality of reciprocity between the powerful and the less powerful characterizes local theories of justice documented in the classic ethnographies of African law (e.g. Bohannan 1957; Gluckman 1955). Also characteristic of such systems, however, is the potential for transforming reciprocity into harsh extraction when the traditional, customary moral code becomes only a weak constraint on the aggrandizement of personalistic, autocratic power. This structural vulnerability was a central principle in Weber's argument about the relationship between morality

and power in patrimonial systems – a principle often confirmed by cross-cultural cases of big man systems, for instance, Sahlins's (1963: 293) classic argument about Melanesian big men, who often substitute 'extraction for reciprocity'.[13] The excesses of big man extraction are often represented in the Upper Guinea Coast region by the trope of 'eating' (Bolton 2012) and the related trope of a 'big belly' (see Shepler 2011 for the case of Sierra Leone; for a generalization of this trope in understanding African politics, see Bayart 1993). In addition, the kinship tropes of reciprocity provide a moral language for critiquing the failures of big man patronage (Murphy, in press).

Patrimonialism as a political system exhibits a fundamental structural tension between the morality of reciprocity and the abuses by power-holders making excessive demands on subjects. Reciprocity in what might be called 'benign' patrimonialism tempers the logic of domination and dependency because a moral code specifies 'the subjects' claim to reciprocity, and this claim "naturally" acquires social recognition as custom' (Weber 1978: 1010). Hence 'the master too "owes" something to the subject … according to custom and his own self-interest' – that is, the patrimonial ruler's moral obligations include 'external protection', 'help in case of need', 'humane treatment' and 'particularly a "customary" limitation of economic exploitation' (Weber 1978: 1010). Such obligations and customary limitations constitute the normative elements of a moral economy of patrimonialism.

Moral Economy and the Language of Injustices

The moral economy of patrimonial patronage provides a local vocabulary for subordinates to critique the injustices of power-holders in terms of a cultural principle of 'justice as fairness' in asymmetrical social relations.[14] This principle is a core idea in philosophical reflections on justice, most notably in the influential formulation of John Rawls (1971). 'Justice as fairness', in his formulation, means that social and economic inequalities are acceptable if they satisfy two conditions: first, equality of opportunity to acquire social positions and political offices; and second, use of positions and offices to the greatest benefit of the least advantaged members of society (see Sen 2009: 59ff., for an exegesis and critique of Rawls).

This philosophical formulation helps clarify the moral economy of obligations in patrimonial patronage. Consider, for example, that the first condition of equality of opportunity is not met because patrimonial patronage is, by definition, a form of elite capture of political and economic resources. True, this institution can be seen ideally to meet the second condition when big man authority is used to fairly redistribute resources to the community. The morality of redistribution, however, is highly vulnerable to political strategies of selectively channelling resources to build up a cadre of followers and clients in order to shore up autocratic power through big man patronage – to the detriment of

the majority in a community. Accumulation of power and privileges via these strategies in the patronage network of patrimonialism leads to the social injustice of impoverishment and political marginalization among the 'least advantaged members of society'.

The second condition of 'justice as fairness' is also violated in patrimonial politics, especially when resources and wealth in people are coercively created through monopolies of military power (as in rebel insurgencies controlling people and territory). For most people, the consequence of this type of political system is destitution and suffering. Moreover, building up a personalistic, discretionary authority with immense military power leads to a characteristic crisis of patrimonial politics – which Weber (1978: 1055) typifies in the image of 'centrifugal forces' of instability and conflict inherent in this political form (see Murphy 2010 on the centrifugal forces in the political and economic history of the Upper Guinea Coast). The moral economy, in other words, breaks down under the pressure of changes in the political economy that enable the monopoly of political and economic resources, notably through increased use of coercive resources for social control, for example government repression or rebel insurgency control of captured territories. The next section outlines the breakdown and failure of the moral economy of patronage – in the form of both patrimonial patronage of governance and the social patronage of everyday life outside government institutions – in the postconflict lives of youth and women.

Social Crisis and Malaise

The crisis of the neopatrimonial state is also a 'crisis of youth', a phrase often used in African political discourse as well as academic discourse in African studies. In the title of Peters' (2011) book on the Sierra Leone civil war, the phrase evokes the social dependency and marginalization of youth as intensified under the political and economic instabilities of the big man system. As Hoffman (2011: 8) notes, global media captured this crisis of youth with evocative captions like 'Sierra Leone Is No Place To Be Young' and references to war-torn Sierra Leone such as calling the country a 'teenage wasteland'. Similarly, the plight of women in the civil war would justify the analogous caption 'Sierra Leone Is No Place To Be Female'. This media language can be translated into the theoretical language of patrimonial patronage. Neopatrimonialism is also a 'crisis of women'. Women are especially vulnerable, in different structural ways, to the excesses of a big man political system that justifies forms of female subordination and servitude (and even, during the civil war, sexual slavery). Girls, moreover, have different socioeconomic trajectories for rebuilding lives – and face different structural constraints – than boys in postconflict communities, as many studies of Liberia and Sierra Leone have emphasized (e.g. Utas 2005b; Coulter 2009; Denov 2010; Moran 2010; Shepler 2014; Van Gog 2008).[15] In general, the central theme in

these studies is the emergence of a new cultural and political space for youth and women to negotiate, redefine and rework prewar social identities and relations (e.g. Richards 2005b; Coulter 2009; Knörr 2010; Shepler 2010; Hoffman 2011; Peters 2011).[16]

Youth and women, however, confront a general social 'malaise' pervading the realignment of social relations during conflict and postconflict (see Macek 2009 for the case of civil war and postconflict in Bosnia). In postconflict Liberia and Sierra Leone, anomie – like creative agency – is typically structured by the social conditions of subordination and marginalization within reproduced patronage structures and practices (see Braithewaite et al. 2010 on the social dynamics of anomie in postconflict reconciliation in Indonesia). In the case of Sierra Leone, Denov (2010: 86), for example, emphasizes that the disruption inherent in civil war entails a dismantling of relationships within local communities, resulting in a profound loss of confidence in one's self and social world (Denov 2010: 86). Coulter (2009: 251), who studied female ex-combatants and 'bush wives' of rebel commanders in Sierra Leone, argues in terms of gender and generational relations that men and women as well as parents and children 'no longer really know what to expect from one another'. Knörr (2010: 226) underscores this social malaise in the special urban context of Krio identity processes in Sierra Leone: the violence of the civil war 'has caused deep feeling of suspicion and distrust concerning one's own people and institutions'. Shepler (2014) points to broader theoretical implications about the cultural constructions of childhood and children's rights by focusing her ethnographic analyses on youth agency in the postconflict Sierra Leonean context of structural change and challenge. And Abramowitz (2014) delineates the trauma of war as an intersection of the social and the psychological and explores the effects of this mental health nexus on Liberian postconflict individual and collective healing (see also Murphy 2015 on the sociopolitical complexities of 'community reconciliation' as a modality of psychological healing).

Many young people and women did not want to return to their villages and communities because they feared subordination under prewar customary forms of authority. Youth worry about gerontocratic processes controlling their labour and services. Women worry about patriarchal power subjugating them. Both worry about the charismatic authority of big men and their personalistic, discretionary power to subjugate and marginalize. Both articulate a kind of 'legitimation crisis' surrounding big man patronage in postconflict sociality.[17] As Menzel (in press) shows for postconflict Sierra Leone, this crisis is manifest in the tension between complicity (out of necessity) in the patron/client logic, and criticism of this logic as producing barriers to societal and individual betterment. Similar structural tensions between big man patronage and clientalist dependency shape the reproduction of discursive critique in postconflict diasporic communities (see Steinberg 2011 on resettled Liberians in New York City).

Youth

In impoverished postconflict conditions, youth are especially dependent on patronage assistance because families and kin groups lack the resources to provide adequately for their children's future and the government fails to provide basic social services. Denov and Buccitelli (2013) analyse several important forms of social dependency in the case of postconflict Sierra Leone, for example relations with an older male who acts as a fictive older brother, or relations with an older woman who acts as a fictive older sister (respectively called 'bra' and 'sisi' in Sierra Leonean Krio). This exchange relation requires that young men or women provide services, for instance performing domestic chores or helping with marketing. In addition, peer groups and gangs provide cross-cutting support, serving to protect youth against mistreatment by a patron; however, they also add another form of dependency to the postconflict social structure that needs to be navigated (Denov and Buccitelli 2013). Newell's (2012) detailed analysis of youth navigating the moral economy of patron/client relations in the gangs of Abidjan, Côte d'Ivoire, exemplifies the reliance on patronage structures in marginal social spaces lacking government control and services.

The fictive kin ties of 'bra' and 'sisi' represent a form of 'social patronage' operating outside governmental political patronage but follow a similar logic of employing resources of wealth and authority to incorporate the labour and loyalty of clients and dependents. Social patrons are, in a sense, 'small' big men and women. In an impoverished postconflict country, even limited power and wealth can be sufficient resources for their holder to act as a 'social patron'. And the labour pool of potential dependents is extensive. Poor youth have little choice but to secure the protection and economic assistance of a patron.

Despite dire dependency, youth recognize unfairness in this patronage relationship and can very clearly articulate the difference between a good and an evil patron, according to a moral economy of patronage. While youth are expected to render services, obedience and money (e.g. from market trade), harsh Dickensian patrons are common, as this youth describes:

> My former bra was very wicked. … He would kick me and slap me and beat me in public. People would try to intervene, but he would yell at them to go away. He would say: 'Don't get involved, he is my borbor [boy]!' (Denov and Buccitelli 2013: 11–12; see also Denov, Doucet and Kamara 2012)

Thus social patrons and powerful political patrons alike are evaluated by the same moral economy of reciprocity that accepts social subordination when there is fairness in the asymmetrical exchanges between patron and client.

In some major towns, another notable example of social patronage strategies in the postconflict political economy is the motorbike trade unions made up

primarily of ex-combatants (e.g. Peters 2007 and 2011). The postconflict narrative of the motorbike trade includes episodes of big men using their patronage power to treat ex-combatants as little more than serfs who are dependent upon patronage resources to gain access to a motorbike and a share in the business. Denov documents in ethnographic detail the harsh forms of social dependency in the patronage logic operating within this particular economic space. In one case of economic patronage, the 'boss' (patron) who owns the motorbike that an ex-combatant rides and uses to make his living treats the client harshly if he does not bring in enough money, as the ex-combatant explains:

> My present trouble is that I don't have a bike of my own and am just making money for someone else [my boss]…. My boss owns the bike. He can ask me to leave at any time because there is really no guarantee in the relationship…. Sometimes when I'm unable to raise 25,000 Leones from the bike, he abuses me verbally and insults me…. He threatens that he will take the bike from me, as if our relationship is just tied around the bike…. All he cares about is the money…. He is arrogant and disrespectful. (Denov 2011: 200–1.

Besides criticism of the 'bad' social patrons of everyday life, a second discursive type of critique arises when youth question their subordination under patrimonial authority in governance structures, and the various secular and religious forms of patriarchy and gerontocracy legitimating those structures. Peters' studies (2005, 2007, 2010, 2011) are especially rich in documentation of Sierra Leonean ex-combatants' critique of youth subordination under the patrimonial authority of chiefs and elders (see also Richards 1996; Fithen and Richards 2005). The group discussions documented by Archibald and Richards (2002) also provide extensive data on the discourse about the injustices of patrimonial practices, such as chiefs and elders co-opting postconflict humanitarian assistance. As one villager lamented: 'Through injustice we have turned our young people to rebels' (Archibald and Richards 2002: 346; see also Utas 2005b). Such discourses 'confirm the salience of local debate about a "generation gap"… and both youth and elders' groups 'refer to young people quitting the village and becoming "footloose", due to heavy fines' imposed on youth by chiefs and elders (Archibald and Richards 2002: 346). Explicit comments about this generation gap clearly identify chiefs' and elders' abuse of patrimonial authority. According to one elders' group, 'the heavy fines levied by chiefs on youths have led to many leaving the villages' (Archibald and Richards 2002: 346). And one youth group observes that 'Chiefs victimize youth by imposing heavy and unjust fines', and 'criminal summonses make youths run from the village, resulting in disunity and grievance' (Archibald and Richards 2002: 347). Extractions of youth labour, debt servitude and ritual subservience produce what some analysts have called 'judicial

serfdom' (Mokuwa et al. 2011; see also Peters 2010) – a key institutional feature of harsh forms of patrimonialism and a danger youth try to avoid in postconflict social reconstruction. In the unique postconflict public sphere of institutional re-evaluations, youth become 'iconoclasts' of big man patronage (see Højbjerg 2007 and Sarró 2009 on the iconoclastic structural tendencies shaped by social turmoil and crises in the Upper Guinea Coast region).

Women

Women's special challenge to patrimonial authority and its patriarchal legitimacy – at both family and community levels – in the aftermath of war is a significant feature of postconflict discourse about injustice. Many studies, notably Coulter (2009) and Denov (2010), document this structural tension and the extensive discourse of women's criticism of the oppression and rejection they find in patriarchal households and communities as they try to reconcile with communities after having spent time with rebel groups as abducted 'bush wives' or girl soldiers. But subordination to patriarchal household and community regimes is only part of the ethnographic story of women's lives in wartime and postconflict Liberia and Sierra Leone. As Moran (2010: 267) has emphasized for Liberia, 'women had also held visible, highly authoritative positions in both rural and urban contexts' before the war. And during the war, as Moran's recent research on men who did not fight in the Liberian civil war demonstrates, women exercised power in subtle ways, such as when senior women took on the role of 'either sending younger male kin to war or refusing them permission to join the armed factions' (Moran 2010: 268). Exclusive focus on 'the discourse of prewar patriarchy' can obscure the 'authority of mothers, grandmothers, and aunts to deploy young men's labor to defense or other tasks' during the war (ibid.: 268). The complexity of power and authority in female roles in traditional Liberian societies, Moran (ibid.: 262) argues, is often neglected in postconflict reform projects, which 'continue to be grounded in static, oversimplified, or locally inappropriate notions of gender'. The explanatory idiom of 'patriarchy' can essentialize and overlook the multifaceted dimensions of struggle and challenge that women face in a weak postconflict political economy (e.g. ibid.: 267–68).

The analytical goal is not to discard the concept of patriarchy but to clearly specify how the ideology of patriarchy operates as a legitimating mechanism of authority in concrete practices within different social structures and political economies of gender relations, such as when a successful woman becomes a kind of patriarch or big man (cf. Enloe 2005). Women's postconflict discourse about the patriarchal justification for their harsh servitude and suffering during the civil war, for example, involves a larger discursive critique of big man (i.e. warlord) organizational structures of war making that used women for forced labour and sexual services.

Research by Archibald and Richard (2002) extensively documents women's critique of patriarchal and gerontocratic authority in postconflict communities (see also Ferme 2001). Regarding the village distribution of humanitarian aid, for instance, women complain that chiefs and elders monopolize the benefits of postwar development, preventing fair distribution. In one chiefdom discussion, 'the women's group complained that women were marginalized and that "customary law keeps women at the bottom of the social ladder" and "the chiefs grab everything that should be women's"' (Archibald and Richards 2002: 348). In this patrimonial logic, law as well as politics become the personal property of chiefs.

Some of the loudest and clearest voices against big man patronage in postconflict Liberia and Sierra Leone have come from women's organizations. For example, Leymah Gbowee, whose organization, the Liberian Women's Initiative, helped end the Liberian civil war in 2003, gained recognition worldwide when she won the 2011 Nobel Peace Prize for her heroic work for peace and women's rights (Gbowee 2011). Similarly, in postconflict Sierra Leone women's organizations were constructed with a 'broader vision of gender equality and the transformation of prevailing patriarchal power' (Maclure and Denov 2009: 619; see also Denov 2008). One of the unintended consequences of the civil wars in Liberia and Sierra Leone was the proliferation of women's groups organizing to challenge, in light of their experience of the wars, the gender norms (and norms of youth subordination) legitimating the patronage institutions reinstituted in postconflict society.

Conclusion and Theoretical Implications

Both international human rights efforts and local critique are often driven by outrage at the injustices of abusive power. Outrage is also the driving force behind much social theoretical work. A canonical example is Marx's analysis of the abuse of workers in capitalist institutions. Marx offered a diagnosis of a structural failure to provide workers with a just reward for the products of their labour, as well as a critique of failures in the distributive justice of allocating resources according to individual needs (Sen 2009: x). In intellectual history his work is emblematic of the integration of rigorous social theory and empathy for social justice.

Outrage, however, is not the privilege of an intellectual elite enlightened with penetrating perceptions of social injustice – a common idea in Marxist political thought. Rather, a broader moral (and social) theory of justice can be constructed on the human capability (in all its different cultural modes of language and expression) to perceive and reason about social injustices (e.g. Sen 2009). This premise encourages methodological attention to the everyday language and critique of unfairness in social life, including special attention to the perceptions of those most vulnerable to the suffering caused by that unfairness. 'In a process

of enlightenment, there are only participants' (Habermas 1994: 101). The social theorist or philosopher or international lawyer is only one participant offering insights enriched by dialogue with those who live the experience of social injustice.

Meanwhile, the outsider's gaze can be limited by 'not seeing' forms of repressive political authority (whether national or subnational) that limit the possibilities of public debate and dissent and create a mask of consensus despite widespread, though muted, dissent and dissension (Murphy 1990). The consequence is that local social critique – its scope and penetration of institutional patterns of injustice – is overlooked. One methodological key to avoiding this oversight is to find 'a better way for the vocabulary of the actors to be heard loud and clear' (Latour 2005: 30). In the case of social injustice, the challenge is to find a better way to broadcast the vocabulary of those most vulnerable to the unjust consequences of institutional practices.

The methodology of 'listening' – with a particular theoretical focus – transforms the large questions of postconflict social justice into more detailed questions about everyday social practices and the everyday language of rebuilding broken and unjust worlds (see Das and Kleinman 2001 on the everyday lived experience of collective violence, social suffering and social recovery). More broadly, this methodological assumption is foundational in building a theory of justice, as Amarta Sen shows in his reflections on the idea of justice:

> We could have been creatures incapable of sympathy, unmoved by the pain and humiliation of others, uncaring of freedom, and – no less significant – unable to reason, argue, disagree and concur. The strong presence of these features in human lives does not tell us a great deal about what particular theory should be chosen, but it does indicate that the general pursuit of justice might be hard to eradicate in human society, even though we can go about that pursuit in different ways. (Sen 2009: 414–15)

Reasoning and debating about injustices is an important part of what it means to be a human being. For anthropologists, the 'strong presence of these features in human lives' does not tell us what aspects of institutional and organizational structures produce unjust consequences, but it does encourage a methodological orientation to people's local discourse and reasoning about the sociopolitical structures leading to those unjust consequences.

Despite the variety of ideological justifications for causing human suffering, both the genealogy of human rights and the moral presumption of human dignity and individual worth within that genealogy (a kind of secular 'sacralization' of the person) are shaped historically by the human and social response to 'negative, distressing, traumatizing experiences of our own and others' suffering' (Joas 2013: 6). The idea of a secular 'sacralization' of the individual, which also

has roots in Durkheim's theory of the growth of individuation through modernization (see Giddens 1972), can be refined to capture the specific negative and traumatic experiences (and injustices) affecting particular social types of persons, such as women or youth.

Finally, the goal of examining those experiences in the study of social justice derives from two important principles of method and social theory: first, theorists of justice 'must begin from a concrete understanding of the lives of those about whom they theorize' (Kiss 1999: 6); and second, 'exploited and marginalized people may be equally poor, but their differences in social position and experience must be taken into account in attempts to diagnose and remedy the injustice of their condition' (Kiss 1999: 9). This essay has attempted to understand such differences by taking into account the structural vulnerabilities of youth and women when they return to postconflict communities, their language of injustice in reaction to reinstituted forms of big man patronage, and the relation of their moral language to the heuristic model of the international legal norm of non-refoulement.

Acknowledgements

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and African studies as a Peace Corps volunteer in Liberia in 1967–68, which then led to doctoral works in anthropology at Stanford University from 1970 to 1976. His early research and publications focused on sociopolitical hierarchies legitimated by privileged knowledge and secrecy, as well as legitimated by firstcomer-latecomer historical relations. His current research and writing seeks to integrate Peircean semiotic theory with social theory in order to understand recent transformations in the Upper Guinea Coast, especially violence, civil war and the politics of postwar institutional reconstruction and social justice, and includes 'Patrimonial Logic of Centrifugal Forces in the Political History of the Upper Guinea Coast', in *The Powerful Presence of the Past: Integration and Conflict along the Upper Guinea Coast* (Brill, 2010).

Notes

1. On the legal relationship between the categories of internally displaced persons and refugees, see Lee (1996). In addition, a residual category of displacement include the 'self-settled' (i.e. those who solve their displacement problems without the formal organizational help of a refugee organization or refugee camp). I want to thank my colleague Akbar Virmani, who is also a refugee scholar, for introducing me to this third type of displaced persons. For the Upper Guinea Coast region, Ray's (in press) research on Casamance refugees in the Gambia has clarified the sociopolitical logic of host/stranger relations that shape self-settlement processes.

2. The analytical category of 'big man' – as well as the term for this institutional state of affairs, 'bigmanity' (see Utas 2012) – glosses the meaning of various key cultural idioms of personalistic authority used in the languages of the Upper Guinea Coast. Such terminological conventions illustrate a core methodological principle: namely, social scientific concepts are often constructed, implicitly or explicitly, with the data of local cultural idioms used to talk about and represent social reality.

3. The phrase 'big man patronage', as used in this essay, implies sociological variation in institutional forms of patronage (Martin 2009: 216ff.).

4. The terms 'international' and 'transnational' – as well as 'global' – are used interchangeably in this essay to designate a legal normative order (and political economy) beyond the nation-state (and subnational communities). In addition, 'postwar' and 'postconflict' are used synonymously here.

5. Legal approaches to individual culpability and anthropological approaches to institutional structures sometimes intersect. For example, understanding the structure of command and control in military organizations helps international lawyers to identify the culpability of leaders in cases of war crimes and crimes against humanity (e.g. see Hagan 2003: Chap. 6 on the legal importance of identifying 'command responsibility' in the Foca rape trial for war crimes in Bosnia).

6. I thank my colleague, Akbar Virmani, for this reference in refugee studies.

7. The term 'local' is often used to distinguish sociopolitical levels within a system of contrasting scales of community, such as the village, town or chiefdom as distinguished from the wider scale of the nation-state or colonial state – or international system. In cultural theory, the term has been used to define a perspective of meaning and interpretation within different circumscribed domains of community (e.g. Geertz 1983). The 'local' in

this sense becomes a standpoint associated with particular structural spaces within a social system. Using the summary definition of Shaw and Wardorf (2010: 6), it is 'a standpoint based on a particular locality but not bounded by it'. Logically, international legal doctrine is 'local' in this perspectival approach to codes of meaning in society.

8. In postconflict discourse about women's rights, for example, common rhetorical assumptions can limit social understanding – the 'seeing' – of the complexity of women's social experience and needs by essentializing womanhood as war victim, peacemaker, or community builder (see critique by Schroven 2011).

9. See Pitcher, Moran and Johnston (2009) for a penetrating critique of the misuse of this concept in African studies; see also Eisenstadt (1973) for further clarification on the difference between traditional patrimonialism and modern neopatrimonialism.

10. On youth gangs as patrimonial organizations, see Collins (2011).

11. In adjudicating war crimes and crimes against humanity, a basic structural tension persists between international criminal justice and national amnesty laws. See R. Murphy (2006) for the jurisprudential and political dynamics of this tension in Uganda's case against the Lord's Resistance Army.

12. The Liberian civil war caused half the population of approximately 3 million to flee their homes. Most became internally displaced while approximately 700,000 became refugees in neighbouring countries.

13. Sahlins's (1963) argument about the politics of Melanesian big men matches the analytical principles in Weber's model of patrimonialism.

14. Violations of the moral economy of patronage are constituted as social realities by the victims' construal of the meaning of 'unfair' social action in patron-client relations – i.e., interpreting social actions as signs of injustice (for the language and logic of reflexivity in Peircean semiotic theory, see Agha 2007, Lucy 1993, and Silverstein 1993). In this communicative logic, in other words, there is a metapragmatics of social injustice.

15. I thank Mariane Ferme for reminding me during discussions at the 2010 Upper Guinea Coast conference in Halle, Germany to underscore the structural differences of gender, which her own work does so insightfully. Another caveat about youth positionality should be mentioned: 'youth' is a sociopolitical, and semiotic, construction of shifting meanings, and not a rigid chronological category – a man of 40 years can be a 'youth' because of certain attributes of socioeconomic inadequacies (e.g. Durham 2004).

16. The analytical ideas of 'navigation', 'strategies' and 'tactics' are central themes in contemporary studies of youth agency and social structure in Africa, e.g., Christensen, Utas and Vigh (2006), Cole and Durham (2008), Denov (2011), Honwana and De Boeck (2005) and Vigh (2006).

17. This is a key term in Habermas's (1973) theory of communicative practice in political change.

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Expanding the Space for Freedom of Expression in Postwar Sierra Leone

Sylvanus Spencer

Introduction

Sierra Leone, a small country on the Upper Guinea Coast, was colonized by the British, who made it a settlement for freed slaves. Hence, the capital came to be known as Freetown. The official language is English, but denizens speak many other ethnic languages; Krio is the lingua franca. At the end of the twentieth century, the country went through a bloody, destructive civil war that puts it in the unenviable group of African states that have been described as 'dysfunctional', 'failed' or 'collapsed' and given rise to much pessimism about the future of the African continent. The gruesome human rights violations that characterized the decade-long civil war became a 'complex humanitarian emergency' that captured the attention of the international community in a big way. This put transnational organizations in a comfortable position to meddle in the affairs of Sierra Leone by promoting neoliberal prescriptions for postwar peace building and governance reform. The factors that led to state failure and outbreak of civil war in this country were long in the making and rooted in the history and politics of this postcolonial state. Hence, although the impact of external factors like neocolonialism, Cold War politics and world market forces cannot be discounted, internal factors are crucial variables in explaining the nature of the African states and the predicaments they face (Francis 2006: 51–53).

Most observers attribute the war to a prolonged period of bad governance manifested in, among other things, political patronage, intolerance of opposing views and marginalization of certain groups (Abraham 2000; Ayissi and Robin-Edward 2000). Since neighbouring Liberia shared a similar history of bad governance, it was not surprising that the rebel war that started there in 1989 spilled over into Sierra Leone in 1991, prompting the formation of an alliance of 'freedom fighters' from both sides of the border. When the diamond mines of eastern Sierra Leone fell into the hands of the insurgents, they found themselves in a

better position to generate the revenue needed to fund their military venture through illegal mining and sale of 'blood diamonds' to unscrupulous foreign dealers (Hirsh 2001).

Richards (1996, 2005), who was one of the first to study the civil war in Sierra Leone, sees it as a crisis of youth: largely illiterate or poorly educated and unemployed youths facing a declining economy and an exploitative and repressive patrimonial regime had little prospect of a brighter future. Susceptible to extremist views, they were potential material for violent mob action. For Richards, it was youths living in the economically harsh and politically oppressive conditions of a rural context rather than disaffected youths in an urban context (as later put forward by Abdullah and others) that constituted the dynamic force of the rebellion.

In accounting for the formation of the Revolutionary United Front (RUF) and the outbreak of civil war in Sierra Leone, Abdullah (2004) highlights the role of 'lumpen youths' who, in the harsh sociopolitical and economic climate of the 1970s and 1980s, became more and more alienated and found common course with disgruntled and radical students with whom they fraternized and shared hopes of changing 'de [the] system'. Peters (2010) described the root causes of the conflict in Sierra Leone as a highly explosive combination of neopatrimonial state collapse and the disaffection of marginalized rural youths. Boas (2001) has argued that the wars in Sierra Leone and neighbouring Liberia could fundamentally be attributed to an 'extreme version' of neopatrimonial politics rooted in a shared history of exclusiveness and marginalization that led to the build-up and later violent explosion of deep-seated hatred.

Whereas bad governance, as manifested in political patronage and marginalization, is a common thread running through the above explanations of the civil war in Sierra Leone, Kaplan (1994) claims that the wars in Sierra Leone and Liberia were devoid of political motives and driven purely by economic considerations of resource accumulation. This view is also shared by Collier and Hoeffler (2003), who make a distinction between 'greed' and 'grievance' and assert that the real cause of the civil wars in West Africa is not the loud discourse of political grievance but the silent motivation of greed for economic resources.

Hoffman (2007) does not subscribe to such an apolitical view of the civil war in Sierra Leone. He argues that the violence perpetrated in the course of the war was a kind of political speech voiced by people desperate to capture attention and be heard. For Hoffman, RUF rapes, lootings, mutilations and other acts of terror should be looked at as springing only partly from economic motives. This resonates with Richards' point that war may be likened to a violent attempt to enter a conversation from which one feels excluded (Richards 2005: xxiii–xxiv). As an ex-rebel fighter puts it, 'Violence is the only language they [politicians] can understand. The more the violence, the more they are prepared to listen and understand.'[1]

Now that the war is over, frantic efforts are being made to consolidate the nation's hard-won fragile peace with the help of the international community,

which has made good governance a precondition for supplying aid and loans to developing countries (Milliken 2003; Neumayer 2003). Promoting the Western model of the right to freedom of expression is considered an important part of this mainly Western-driven governance reform programme. Freedom of expression may be defined as the liberty to make known one's views, feelings, convictions and so on without violating the rights of others or jeopardizing their security. It is also the right to refrain from expressing one's views as long as this is not due to any harassment or intimidation. It takes different forms like speaking, writing, singing and acting.

This chapter employs theories, travelling models and translation to critically examine efforts by transnational institutions (working in partnership with local actors) to promote the right of freedom of expression in a postwar setting. It seeks to scrutinize some of the strategies that are being utilized and to highlight unintended outcomes and contextual challenges associated with the peculiar realities on the ground.

'Travelling models' refers to certain globally circulating ideas for tackling (among other things) governance-related problems like underdevelopment and civil conflicts. Often prescribed by Western countries and international financial institutions like the World Bank and the IMF, these models are often outcomes of peculiar experiences and discourses in the Western world. The freedom of expression model that is promoted as part of Sierra Leone's postwar governance reform programme has deep roots in the political history of the West that can be traced from Greco-Roman times (Berti 1978) to the Humanist tradition of the Renaissance and the Enlightenment of the eighteenth century.[2] However, only after the Second World War were vigorous efforts made to universalize freedom of expression as seen in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, adopted in 1948.

Although travelling models like freedom of expression, decentralization and gender mainstreaming have proven very useful in the Western contexts from which they 'travel', they may not have the desired impacts in sociocultural and political contexts where they are newly arrived (Reyna 2007). Travelling ideas, it has been argued, 'travel' across transnational boundaries through a process of translation. Translation implies transformation, not just transfer or movement from one place to another (Rottenburg 2005; see also Rottenburg 2008). In other words, the 'receiving culture' is not just a passive recipient of the travelling idea but is actively involved in assessing, modifying, transforming or appropriating the models in line with local realities.

Transnational and Local Actors

Transnational and local actors work in partnership to promote the freedom of expression model in postwar Sierra Leone. These include transnational govern-

mental agencies like the United States Agency for International Development, the United Kingdom's Department for International Development; United Nations family members like the United Nations Development Plan (UNDP) and the United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization; and media foundations like the Thompson and Ford Foundations. There are also state agencies and a host of international and local NGOs and civil society groups entangled in a complex transnational web.

Transnational interventions are clearly evident not only at state level but also locally, as many of Africa's civil society groups are not purely local or grass-roots organizations, despite often giving that impression. They are mainly international organizations or branches of them, and even where they spring up locally they tend to be organized, funded and guided by the vision of international bodies. Hence, Ferguson (2006) asserts that the state-versus-civil-society analytic framework that is generally taken for granted in the study of African politics turns out to be flawed when subjected to critical scrutiny. He points out that this analytic framework presents a vertical image or topography of power that is rather simplistic and misleading when viewed against the transnational context within which both the powers at the top (state) and civil society, ideally representing the bottom (local), operate. Englund (2006) makes a similar assertion, maintaining that transnational connections and influences, as manifested in (among other things) funding, formulating and implementing human rights and democratization programmes, appear at both state and civil society levels, and that these crucial complex transnational links have to be factored into understanding the dynamics of the African state.

Transnational interventions in Africa and the Global South are not driven merely by humanitarian considerations. They are also predicated on the West's pursuit of strategic self-interest. Hence, international peace-building operations since the end of the Cold War are firmly anchored in the idea of the liberal peace. Such peace building in 'failed' and collapsed states revolves around a 'security-development' nexus born of the view that these states are a threat to international peace in various ways, including their potential to become a breeding ground for terrorists and other extremists who may strike in the West (Duffield 2001). Other spin-offs of wars in failed states on countries outside the immediate theatres of armed conflicts, include the proliferation of arms, drug trafficking, massive and unexpected displacement of people beyond established borders, the outbreak and spread of diseases, disruption of international trade, environmental degradation and more. Any of these could somehow directly or indirectly impact the stability and prosperity of the West. Underdevelopment due to bad governance and the resultant economic downslide, extreme poverty, corruption and weakened social cohesion are held to be the main precursors of these 'new wars'. It is therefore assumed that development effected by neoliberal prescriptions would diffuse tensions in these areas and provide the stability that is vital to the continued stability

of the West. This brings to mind the Truman Doctrine, which in the interest of the United States and its World War II allies sought to contain the spread of communism by using funds to combat the poverty and underdevelopment that apparently create a seedbed for communist extremism (Urwin 1989).

The strategies that transnational actors employ in partnership with local actors to translate free expression to postwar Sierra Leone include establishment of a supportive legal framework, provision of media support and civic education programmes. However, the realities on the ground pose considerable challenges to the effectiveness of these strategies and militate against full achievement of the desired outcomes. In line with the concept of translation, the targeted culture is not just passively accepting the model wholesale but is involved in modifying and adapting the model to suit existing realities.

Local translators, who generally have more organic and direct contact with the local communities, are key partners in the translation process. As Lewis and Mosse (2006) point out, they often form a crucial link between local communities and transnational actors from other sociocultural backgrounds (Lewis and Mosse 2006). In this scheme of things, they are positioned to package the model by modifying or adapting it to fit local logics and local context while also identifying commonalities (Merry 2006). Although human rights are said to be universal, cultural relativism tends to creep into how they are understood, translated and practised in different sociocultural contexts (An-Na'im and Deng 1990). For instance, in traditional settings local translators of the right to freedom of expression tend to remain silent about the model's potential to undermine and erode long cherished traditions and to bring about unwelcome shifts in power relations between, for instance, youths and elders or women and men. Furthermore, when it comes to the sensitive issue of secret societies serving as a traditional impediment to free expression, it is generally considered prudent to just gloss over that issue or shelve it until some future date.[3]

Working for a Supportive Legal Framework

Working for a supportive legal framework is a major strategy in translating freedom of expression. Those actors who promote this supportive legal framework are guided by the view that freedom of expression is both a political and a legal matter, and that it must be governed and regulated by a conducive legal framework in order to be fully enjoyed and not abused. It is generally assumed that once laws are clearly laid down and penalties for infringement spelled out, people who do not want to be culpable are likely to observe them.[4] Yet a closer look at the realities on the ground shows that this is simply not the case.

Transnational organizations like the Westminster Foundation for Democracy, the National Endowment for Democracy and the Open Society Justice Initiative (OSJI) are involved in promoting a revisitation of the existing laws

guaranteeing and regulating free expression in Sierra Leone. Their aim in doing so is to determine how supportive of this right these laws are and how far they accord with modern democratic standards and trends. To this end they have supported advocacy movements for the review of such laws and even provided them with technical and financial assistance. It is hoped that the reviews will result in enactment of new laws like the freedom of information law that is being strongly advocated. Some Sierra Leoneans have expressed hope that with transnational support, laws enacted as far back as the colonial period that do not fulfil the requirements of a democratic postcolonial society will be expunged from the law books. Furthermore, legal reforms assisted by transnational bodies are expected to lead to a harmonizing of the contradictions and ambiguities that currently tend to serve as legal cover, allowing violations to take place with impunity.

The most unpopular legal restriction on freedom of expression in Sierra Leone, which has been repeatedly attacked with the help of transnational support, is part 5 of the 1965 Public Order Act, which criminalizes defamatory and seditious libel. The Public Order Act stems from the colonial period, when it was used to silence leaders of the nationalist struggle. In the post-independence period it has been used to gag opposition and critics, serving as a trap that has landed many journalists in jail. The Truth and Reconciliation Commission (Sierra Leone) – a transnational brainchild set up with transnational funds – states in its report that this law is a relic of the colonial period. The commission considers it outmoded and strongly recommends that it be expunged from the nation's law books (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone 2004: 131–32). But despite many public pronouncements in favour of this measure, there has been considerable reluctance to make it a reality – apparently due to apprehension that decriminalizing libel would give citizens a stronger voice to fearlessly scrutinize politicians and hold them accountable, something long absent in the political culture of Sierra Leone.

Section 32(2) of the Public Order Act states:

> Any person who publishes any false statement, rumour or report which is calculated to bring into disrepute any person who holds office under the constitution in the discharge of his duties shall be guilty of an offence and liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding five hundred Leones or to imprisonment not exceeding two years or both.

Section 33 states that a person who, among other things, utters a seditious statement or 'prints, publicizes, sells, offers for sale, distributes or reproduces any seditious publication' shall be guilty of seditious libel and will be imprisoned for up to three years for a first offence and up to seven years in the case of subsequent offences. Subsection 2 makes it a crime to be in possession of a story or article declared to be seditious.

Transnational translators of the free expression model insist that by modern standards, these provisions of the Public Order Act are draconian in that they impose lengthy imprisonment on offenders just for, among other things, expressing their political views. They maintain that statements critical of governments are necessary and vital to keep them in check. Many local civil society groups caught up in the complex web of transnationalism – especially media practitioners and human rights activists – have expressed the opinion that this law is contrary to the spirit of democracy and militates against development and the consolidation of the nation's hard-won peace.[5]

The Sierra Leone Association of Journalists and the 1965 Public Order Act

With transnational support, the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists (SLAJ) has been one of the most active agitators for the repeal of the 1965 Public Order Act, which has been called a 'killer bill'. This is understandable because media practitioners, more than any other category of citizen, have fallen victim to this law. It is therefore unsurprising that when the Law Reform Commission was set up (with international but mainly British support) to review the nation's laws, SLAJ was one of the earliest to appeal to it for a review of this law.

When a new government was elected in 2007, hopes ran high that the ill-famed act would at last be nullified because the new president had been an ardent critic of it while in the opposition. In fact, the ruling All Peoples' Congress Party had, in its manifesto for the 2007 elections, pledged to review the Public Order Act and 'improve public trust, confidence and interest through information sharing' by removing 'bottle necks and obstacles that stifle this free flow [of information]'(All Peoples Congress Party 2007).[6] The spirit of optimism for a free press was also felt by the World Association of Newspapers (WAN), which welcomed the president's declared commitment to abrogate the criminal libel law of 1965.[7] Under the previous government, headed by President Tejan Kabbah, WAN – in collaboration with the International Press Institute, another transnational organization – had written an open letter to the then president, fruitlessly calling upon him to repeal the nation's libel law.[8]

When it became clear that the new government (in spite of many public pronouncements and commitments) was dragging its feet over the hoped-for repeal of the law, the SLAJ's Bo Convention (of 2008) resolved to seek legal redress. Thus SLAJ, with support from OSJI, the Society for Democratic Initiatives (Sierra Leone) and the Media Foundation for West Africa, filed a lawsuit on 25 February 2008 challenging the constitutional validity of part 5 of the Public Order Act of 1965, which, the plaintiffs claimed, directly contravened the guarantee of freedom of expression enshrined in the third chapter of the 1991 Constitution

of Sierra Leone. This lawsuit has the distinction of being the first direct legal challenge to criminal libel law in the region.[9]

It took the Supreme Court well over six months to issue a ruling on the matter, contrary to the constitutional provision, in Section 120 (16), that it should deliver its decision on matters brought before it not later than three months after the conclusion of the evidence and final arguments. As media practitioners and some members of the public grew impatient with what they considered the judiciary's sluggish response, journalists registered their impatience by imposing a news blackout on the judiciary and later staged a peaceful protest in front of the office of the ombudsman. The situation played into the hands of politicians, who excused themselves from addressing the matter by saying it was already in the hands of the judiciary, whose decision they were not supposed to influence. The long-awaited verdict held that the criminal libel laws contained in the Public Order Act did not contravene the provisions for freedom of expression contained in the 1991 Constitution, because the Constitution also makes provision for the right to be legally restricted, as seen in Section 25 (2).

Contextual Challenges

Promotion of freedom of expression through advocacy for appropriate legal and policy frameworks rests on the assumption that once these laws are in place, stakeholders will have no choice but to abide by them, if they do not wish to be culpable. However, experience has shown that even when these laws are in place, the lack of political will to let them serve their purpose often fosters crafty and ingenious manipulations by state and even nonstate actors. This tends to defeat the purposes of such laws. Writing about Africa's media in this connection, Nyamnjoh (2005) observes:

> One of the greatest threats to media freedom in Africa has been the reluctance on the part of government to liberalize press laws. Even where there was such liberalization in principle, governments tended to introduce, by underhand or round about ways, measures and practices that effectively curtail press freedom.

This is often the case when the judiciary, which is supposed to blow the whistle and impose penalties when there is a breach of the law, has compromised its integrity and therefore lost credibility. Hence, in spite of all the clarion calls for repeal of the nation's criminal libel laws, only recently did the Sierra Leone Bar Association produce a statement calling on the government to speedily repeal such laws and enact a freedom of information law. The ongoing judicial reforms, designed to put in place an uncompromised, independent, properly equipped

and adequately staffed judiciary, could be considered a crucial part of the entire postwar democratization process in Sierra Leone. Thinking along similar lines led the commissioners of Sierra Leone's Truth and Reconciliation Commission to observe that 'in a true democracy there is no compromise on the supremacy of the constitution and the rule of law' (Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone 2004: 140).

A major weakness of efforts to reform media and free expression laws in this country is that translators have generally not taken into consideration the dual legal system: so far, the focus has been on only the formal legal system. This is not surprising, as the formal system is what the foreign translators of the free expression model most easily relate to. Meanwhile, their local partners are reluctant to vigorously confront certain long-cherished, sensitive traditions lest the effort provoke outright rejection of the model. However, it is vital to factor the traditional legal system into legal reforms that favour freedom of expression if this fundamental human right is to become truly national and universal.

The traditional legal system is rooted in the customs and traditions of ethnic communities in the former Protectorate. The judicial structure of Sierra Leone gives the Native Administration Courts of the traditional legal system jurisdiction over certain matters, beyond which disputes should in principle be sent to the formal courts. The Native Administration Courts dispense justice in line with customary laws that are largely unwritten and thus leave ample room for abuse. Certain restrictions and expectations of this system are not friendly to free expression. For instance, women and youths are deprived of a strong, direct voice in political decisions that affect them. The system also favours a culture of secrecy that denies access to information to nonmembers of the secret societies that preside over the making of certain decisions in some traditional settings.

Thus, despite the dreams and ongoing efforts to harmonize the formal and traditional legal systems in Sierra Leone, the task has proven overwhelming and the dream is far from being realized in the face of enormous social and even political implications.

Providing Media Support

Some transnational organizations, such as the U.S.-based Search for Common Ground and the British Broadcasting Corporation World Service Trust, have pursued a strategy of providing media support as a way of promoting freedom of expression. Interviews with some of these organizations reveal that they are mainly driven by the conviction that an irresponsible and unprofessional media is worse than an autocratic regime because irresponsible media practices tend to help justify the autocratic dislike of free expression. These groups operate under the rationale that proper training leads not just to technical knowhow but also to professionalism, dedication, discipline and responsibility. Therefore, providing

training for media practitioners is an important component of media support. Media training is expected to nurture the media as a powerful instrument of free expression and curb reckless media practices.

Media support also extends to funding media organizations. Some of these have been established by local initiatives but remain very much dependent on transnational support to meet their running costs and fulfil their agendas. Transnational support for media organizations often reflects the conviction that a free media plays an important part in promoting development and democratic good governance. For this to be done meaningfully and responsibly while also overcoming attempts to suppress and manipulate press freedom, so the logic goes, media practitioners need to protect themselves and the integrity of their profession through vibrant organizations. It is hoped that unifying individuals and groups will help promote professionalism, facilitate networking with media organizations within and outside the country (e.g. the Committee for the Protection of Journalists, which works to protect press freedom worldwide) and assist in building a united front with journalists, speaking with one voice in advocacy campaigns and in alerts raised about media violations. This is important because African media tend to be divided along ethnic and partisan lines. Hence, SLAJ has the stated objective 'To unite the family of journalists to have one voice'.[10]

Impact and Contextual Challenges

Despite huge transnational support for media organizations, the increasing number of training opportunities available and the corresponding increase in the number of people taking advantage of them, the general opinion is that these factors have not had significant impact on the press in terms of the quality of media coverage among other things. The training workshops and seminars are too brief for any effective training to take place. To somehow transcend this limitation, the Canada-based Journalists for Human Rights has a team of resident trainers attached to some media outlets in Sierra Leone, where they work alongside local journalists and hold regular monthly workshops.

Some media practitioners have often complained that the foreign trainers in particular tend to offer them only rudimentary materials that are not new to them, or not relevant to their professional needs. Some are drawn to these training workshops not by the prospect of improving themselves professionally but by financial incentives for attending, which they consider a supplement to their low income.[11] Indeed, the president of SLAJ, in presenting his election manifesto (2008), promised to compile a media training blueprint based on the felt needs of the nation's media, so that 'whichever international organization wants to organize a training program in the country will have to choose from our felt needs and not their self-imposed courses'.[12]

Media trainers from outside Sierra Leone are usually unfamiliar with some of the peculiar constraints on the press in the country, so the training they offer tends not to reflect the contextual realities (Carothers 1999: 242). For instance, in an effort to show what a badly written story is, a trainer from the United States fished one out of a local newspaper and specifically pointed out that it was one-sided. Then, however, the writer of the story explained that in the absence of a freedom of information act, it was difficult to get other views; he had hoped that publishing a one-sided story 'may smoke out' other sides of it.[13] The bottom line is that although training may be guided by very laudable intentions, to be meaningful it has to take into consideration local challenges affecting the media and freedom of expression in general. These include not only the absence of a freedom of information law, which favours rumour-mongering and impedes investigative journalism, but also high levels of illiteracy and poverty and a fragmented, politicized media open to manipulation by unscrupulous politicians.

The focus on training journalists as a way of improving professionalism is based on the assumption that those trained will continue to stay on the job. But indications are that staff retention is poor because low remuneration forces journalists to migrate to better paid jobs. This creates a vicious cycle in which there is always a need for trained journalists who, after training (especially young ones), are likely to move on to greener pastures. In this connection, the head of the Mass Communications Unit at Fourah Bay College (University of Sierra Leone) once lamented the problem of retaining journalists trained in the media profession by his unit, saying that their attraction to better paid jobs had kept them from making a positive impact on the media.[14]

Media support directed at getting the media to develop a corporate identity, pull their resources together and speak with one voice on issues that affect them has not yielded the desired result. This is owed in part to a failure to steer away from ethnic sentiments and political leanings, as the media in Sierra Leone – as in many other African countries – are torn by partisan and tribal strife, and media practitioners, despite much rhetoric, have allowed these narrow and selfish considerations to override professional ethics and national interests. In a speech marking the thirty-eighth anniversary of the founding of SLAJ, the association's president, referring to undiminished infighting and disunity within the media, lamented that the nation's media could become the cause of the next civil disturbance in the country if practitioners do not behave responsibly and put national interest above all else.

Undertaking Civic Education

Providing civic education with the aim of transmitting democratic knowledge and values, fostering democratic practices and encouraging civic engagement is another strategy employed in translating freedom of expression. Civic education may be defined as a form of education that, by itself or as part of a broader system

of education, is designed to formally or informally transmit knowledge, skills and values that are associated with responsible citizenship. Its fundamental aim is to equip and motivate citizens to effectively participate in governance and activities that affect the well-being of the public (Finkel 2003: 4–5).

In Sierra Leone, several governmental and nongovernmental agencies, politicians, educational institutions and civil society groups, among others, have engaged in providing some form of civic education for the building of a democratic culture. However, few of these civic education providers focus explicitly on promoting the right to freedom of expression in their programmes. Understandably, the media and some human rights groups devote more attention to promoting the right to freedom of expression.

In translating the model of the right to freedom of expression, civic educators with some training and initiative often seek to draw parallels with aspects of the local way of life that in some ways support the value of free expression. These translators of the model often attempt to make their presentations lively, meaningful and acceptable in local contexts by drawing on local aphorisms, parables, folklore, symbols and the like that in some way portray the value of airing one's views. For example, in teaching the importance of the right to freedom of expression during a civic education outreach programme at Waterloo Village on the outskirts of Freetown, members of the civic group Adventist Youths Organization sought to drive home their message by linking it with popular local sayings such as 'God has given us mouths so that we can speak out our minds' and 'Your grievances are only known when you reveal them'.

In the same vein, 'fambul tok' – a local concept that could be translated as 'frank family discussions' – is used by Fambul Tok International (a 'local' NGO) to convey the importance of candid, open expressions of interests and grievances among community members. The 'fambul tok' concept is based on the notion that in an ideal family, members are at liberty to freely express the depth their minds, knowing full well that the grievances or concerns will be heard regardless of their nature, and that generally all efforts will be made to amicably address these issues with the interest of the family in mind. Like other translators of Western models of conflict management and good governance, Fambul Tok International draws on some locally cherished social values and symbols as a strategy for translating freedom of expression.

The strategy of linking the model with local symbols and drawing on cultural frames of reference in order to induce acceptance is also evident in the media and civic education programmes of the U.S.-based NGO Search for Common Ground, whose mission statement says:

> We work with local partners to find culturally appropriate means to strengthen societies' capacity to deal with conflict constructively; to understand the differences and act on the commonalities.[15]

Search for Common Ground engages in (among other things) the training of media practitioners and produces good governance and civic education radio programmes through its Talking Drum Studios. The name 'Talking Drum' is a cultural reference point and a cultural link to the notion of free expression. It refers to a common West African musical instrument that is used not only for entertainment purposes but also to summon people to a gathering for discussion or call a meeting to attention.

Meaningful civic education requires more than just acquiring knowledge about freedom of expression and other human rights and being able to discuss the issues surrounding them. Apart from transmitting knowledge (which unfortunately tends to be the emphasis in most cases) there is also a need to get citizens to internalize the civic value of free expression and reflect it in their attitudes and behaviours. This demands systematic, sustained sessions rather than mere sporadic sessions devoted to mainly transmitting knowledge. Whereas knowledge may be acquired in several classroom sessions or community meetings, internalization of values leading to a desired change in attitude and behaviour tends to be much more gradual. This is especially so when certain aspects of the political culture are at variance with the desired civic education goals. Thus effective civic education is not just delivered through lessons taught but also involves a complex web of corporation and reinforcement from interdependent social institutions like the home, social groups and the wider community, which are also engaged in the process of political socialization (Stroupe and Sabato 2004).

Impact and Contextual Challenges

That transmitting civic knowledge alone is not enough to promote freedom of expression is evident from the fact that even some highly educated citizens are at times hesitant to freely exercise their rights. This is very much so when it comes to exercising the right to free expression by speaking a contrary view or taking the opposite side on certain issues. This tendency could be partly attributed to the prevalence of a patronage system in which people at times seek to elicit a patron's protection and support by turning a blind eye and keeping quiet about certain issues bordering on that patron's integrity. Apart from this political hypocrisy, there are also times when even highly educated people have been socially conditioned by a general culture of silence and what Ibelema (2008) calls 'civic cynicism', that is, the pessimistic conviction that the situation is so bad it cannot be remedied, no matter how much one speaks out against it.

The high level of intolerance of opposing views manifested by students, especially in student union elections at tertiary institutions, also underscores the observation that acquisition of knowledge alone does not guarantee that citizens will claim and freely exercise their right to free expression (or other rights). Freedom of expression involves more than making one's own views known – rec-

ognition of the other sides' right to make their views known in matters both political and nonpolitical. With regards to expressing political views, high levels of intolerance have been manifest at educational institutions where, for instance, students from rival student union political camps have violently persecuted their colleagues for holding different views. This occurred during the 2008 student union elections at the Freetown Teachers College when one camp of students presented its election manifesto and then violently prevented members of the other camp from presenting theirs. In recent times the university campuses of Fourah Bay College (FBC) and Njala University have witnessed violent confrontations between student political camps that resulted in temporary bans of student union bodies. In fact, just under two years after the ban was lifted on student union politics at FBC, electoral violence erupted again between the 'Black Camp' and the 'White Camp', which are said to be receiving support from the two leading political parties in the country.

As the fever of the 2010 FBC student union election ran high, the Peace Society, Students for Democracy, and the Media and Public Relations Department of the Sierra Leone Police, among others, took pre-emptive measures to forestall violence. Yet in spite of intervention by campus- and noncampus-based human rights and peace organizations preaching the values of free expression and political tolerance, violent outbursts resulted in wounding with intent and destruction of property. This ugly development at FBC was worrisome to most observers not only because the students, as future leaders, are expected to set an example of tolerating divergent political views, but also because student politics at FBC in the 1980s somehow became a seedbed that sprouted the revolutionary fervour that culminated in the decade-long civil war (Abdullah 2004: Chaps. 2 and 3).

In assessing the use of civic education to promote freedom of expression and other rights, one has to examine whether the knowledge, skills and values transmitted have brought about the intended attitudinal and behavioural change manifested in a political orientation towards good citizenship and meaningful participation in governance.

Compared with what obtained in the prewar period, many more citizens across the country do have some knowledge about the right to freedom of expression and know they are entitled to enjoy it. However, a large percentage of the population of Sierra Leone have not demonstrated that they know how to exercise this right within the confines of the law. Apparently they have not fully realized and appreciated that there are very good reasons to do so. This should not be attributed only to failure to strike a balance between 'rights' and 'responsibilities' or, in some cases, to initiate and sustain well-thought-out civic education programmes. It is also due to the fact that bringing about attitudinal and behavioural change is a gradual process – especially in postwar settings like Sierra Leone, where the political culture has long been marked by exclusiveness

and intolerance that can be traced far back to the early years of the post-independence period.

The high level of illiteracy and lack of formal education do not help the situation. As the UNDP points out in its *Practical Guidance Note* on civic education, 'literacy levels are fundamental in civic education programming and can be a significant barrier if not addressed appropriately' (United Nations Development Plan 2004: 27). Illiteracy means that the educational information transmitted cannot be reinforced by the printed word; nor can the learning experience be sustained and exchanged by that means. Furthermore, the lack of formal education may affect citizens' capacity to appreciate abstract concepts and fully analyse and evaluate what is being conveyed. This is why the Sierra Leone Adult Education Association, in addition to its commitment to promote peace building and human rights among adults, is also engaged in supporting programmes to reduce the high rate of illiteracy among them.

A major weakness in translating freedom of expression through civic education is the apparent over-emphasis on political and civil rights (i.e. the category of rights to which freedom of expression belongs) at the expense of economic, social and cultural rights. Englund (2006) describes how both political elites and civil society groups tend to fall short in this respect in their promotion of human rights in Malawi. While not subscribing to the view that there is a hierarchy of rights, Englund asserts that political rights tend to be very abstract to the ordinary man, and that dwelling simply on them diverts attention from real bread-and-butter issues like health, employment and education, which are enshrined in economic, social and cultural rights and tend to have more immediate relevance to the needs and conditions of the masses. Englund maintains that this imbalance, evidenced by both political elites and civil society with support from transnational bodies, deprives the citizenry of the substantive meaning of democracy. Still, this need not be the case if human rights are presented as indivisible or mutually supportive.

Although freedom of expression belongs to the category of civil and political rights and may be regarded as a primary right, it is more meaningfully promoted by positioning it alongside economic, social and cultural rights rather than solely with other civil and political rights. The right to freedom of expression is related to economic, social and cultural rights and can in many ways contribute to real socioeconomic and cultural gains. For instance, deprived communities have to be able to freely and openly voice their felt needs to engage the attention of government and attract an appropriate response. Also, for the development process to be meaningful to citizens, and for them to have a vested interest in the process, they are expected to participate in various ways, including by expressing their views on development policies and programmes. The vertical and horizontal flow of information may provide feedback helpful in managing conflict and building

the peaceful environment that is often conducive to economic development and social well-being.

Conclusion

Despite many challenges, transnational interventions in translating the model of freedom of expression in postwar Sierra Leone have contributed to a gradual expansion of political space for increased participation in governance (although in some cases this participation is manipulated, as when people are, contrary to their political convictions, financially seduced into putting up a show of support by masquerading in political party colours). The expanding space for free expression and participation in governance is evident in a growing media pluralism and the mushrooming of civil society groups (some of which have questionable credentials, however). Also increasing is the use of pop music, especially by young people, to express political views critical of their governments. Through the disparaging lyrics of pop songs like 'Mr Government' and 'Positive Change', Sierra Leonean youth have become very vocal about issues like mismanagement, corruption and tribalism. This unprecedented development is a far cry from what obtained in the past, when singing of such songs was enough to land one behind bars and discussing such issues was an offence known as 'careless talk'.

Although the freedom of expression model has the potential to fulfil the desired outcomes of managing conflicts and encouraging participation in governance, at times it inadvertently generates new conflicts associated with what some politicians view as irresponsible exercise of this freedom. Some concerned citizens have also bemoaned what they perceive as unhealthy rivalry among highly politicized media groups as a new source of conflict. Elderly citizens in particular have lamented the use of what they consider to be vulgar and inciting lyrics by allegedly contracted musicians. For instance, two of the songs of Sierra Leonean musician Innocent – 'Bailiff' and 'Ejectment [Eviction] Notice' – convey the idea of forceful removal of the ruling government. In the latter song, which mentions unpopular politicians who insist on perpetuating their hold on power at all costs, he sings of stabbing them in the stomach. Similarly, the musician Emerson Bockarie, in his popular 'Borboh Belleh' (Boy with Bloated Stomach) maintains that it is right to beat up a thief (which in this context refers to a corrupt politician) until he loses a tooth. This use of violent lyrics cannot be ascribed solely to the horrifying violence experienced during the country's recent civil war. Also pertinent is that most of these artists are inspired by American hip-hop musicians who, in exercising their right to free expression as provided for in the First Amendment of the American Constitution, have become notorious for their use of vulgar lyrics and glorification of violence.

The translation approach offers a realistic expectation that the free expression model will not be wholly passively accepted by the culture into which it is being translated. It implies sensitivity to cultural and contextual differences, which may be taken on board in the process of translation. Translators should not be surprised or discouraged by unintended outcomes or achievements that only marginally reflect what obtains back home in the West.

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Notes

1. Interview: Henry Lebbie, ex-combatant of the RUF (Revolutionary United Front), 19 February 1997.
2. The Renaissance and Enlightenment were intellectual movements in Europe that stressed, among other things, the need for free expression and tolerance.
3. Interview: A.G. Sesay, Catholic Justice and Peace Commission, 17 August 2010.
4. Interviews: James Wolo, Head of Media Monitoring and Development (United Nations Mission in Liberia), 19 March 2008; J.C. Humper, Chairman Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Sierra Leone, 28 May 2007.
5. Interview: Ronald Gidwani, President of Human Rights Clinic, Fourah Bay College, 7 May 2007.
6. All Peoples Congress Party Manifesto for the 2007 Elections, retrieved 19 October 2015 from http://www.sierraherald.com/apc-manifesto.htm.
7. See Newsletter of the World Association of Newspapers, no. 38, April 2008.
8. 'Sierra Leone: Open Letter to President on Libel Laws'. Retrieved 9 November 2009 from http://www.pambazuka.org/en/category/media/28778.
9. 'Lawsuit Seeks Greater Freedom of Expression in Sierra Leone'. Retrieved 20 March 2008 from http://www.justiveinitiative.org/db/resource2?res_id=104048.
10. See the Sierra Leone Association of Journalists website: http://slajsl.com// (retrieved 22 November 2008).
11. Interview: Mathew Qwerty, journalist, Radio Democracy, 7 May 2006.
12. Manifesto of Umaru Fofanah for the 2008 SLAJ presidential election. Retrieved from SLAJ Head Office, Campbell Street, Freetown.
13. Interview: Alpha Rashid Jalloh, media practitioner, *Independent Newspaper,* 11 May 2008.
14. Statement of Isaac Massaquoi, head of the Mass Communications Unit, Fourah Bay College Faculty of Arts Board Meeting, 13 May 2009.
15. See the Search for Common Ground website: http: //www.sfcg.org/sfcg/sfcg_home.html (retrieved 5 April 2008).

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Chapter 12

Sierra Leone, Child Soldiers and Global Flows of Child Protection Expertise

Susan Shepler

In the field of international struggles for the protection of children affected by war, there are many 'firsts' in the case of Sierra Leone. The peace accord signed in Lomé in 1999 was the first African peace accord to specifically mention the reintegration of former child soldiers. The United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone was the first UN peacekeeping mission to include a child protection officer. The Special Court for Sierra Leone was the first international criminal tribunal to convict individuals of war crimes for conscripting and enlisting children.[1]

Since then, the field of child protection for children affected by war has only expanded. Disarmament, demobilization and rehabilitation programmes for children are now standard practice in nations where child soldiers exist. In 2006, Thomas Lubanga of the DRC became the first person ever arrested under a warrant issued by the International Criminal Court for the war crime of conscripting and enlisting children under the age of fifteen years and using them to participate actively in hostilities. Across the world, there are currently over sixty child protection advisers in seven UN peacekeeping missions and in two UN political missions, and there is a move to include child protection officers in all peacekeeping missions.[2] The UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict notes that

> mainstreaming the issue of children and armed conflict in United Nations system-wide activities and within United Nations entities is a central strategy to ensure the practical application of standards and norms for the protection of children. Significant progress has been made, particularly in the peace and security sector. The General Assembly and the Security Council have led the way in enabling more concerted action

by the United Nations system as a whole on children affected by armed conflict.[3]

Furthermore, the UN Security Council has asked regional organizations to include 'child protection expertise' in their secretariats and development of child protection action plans.

This phenomenal growth in the institutional development of child protection for children affected by war mirrors the speed with which the international community adopted the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the most widely and quickly adopted human rights convention in history. At the risk of sounding cynical, it seems clear that child protection for children affected by war is a growth industry, creating new employment and new expertise around the world. The focus of this chapter is these remarkable transnational processes of institutionalization and knowledge production. At issue are the following questions: What is child protection expertise? Where does it come from? How is it created? How does it move around the world?

I address these questions through an exploration of child protection expertise as it was deployed in Sierra Leone during and after the conflict there (1991 to 2002). The war in Sierra Leone is known in the world for three things (rightly or wrongly): blood diamonds, amputation as a weapon of war and child soldiers. Although children and youth's participation in violent conflict is not new (Rosen 2005; Shepler 2010b) the modern phenomenon of 'child soldier' is new. My dissertation (Shepler 2005a) was based on eighteen months of ethnographic fieldwork in interim care centres for demobilized child soldiers and in a number of communities where children were reintegrating. In it I described how the process of child soldiers' reintegration drew on two different models of childhood: the Western, represented by the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child; and the Sierra Leonean, represented by traditions of child labour, fosterage, and training. My work focuses on the conjuncture of the global and the local models of childhood, describing how in practice child soldiers are made at the intersection of the two. Between these two models there are clear power differences, the Western model better funded and based on child protection expertise. Despite the obvious power asymmetry, however, I do not regard this encounter as merely an imposition. Indeed, I found the intersection of the two models to be a productive site for all concerned, with some Sierra Leoneans strategically using child rights discourse for their own ends and international child rights practitioners honing their models for export to other postconflict contexts. Child rights discourse and child protection practice did ease the reintegration of some children and youth while also benefiting some local NGOs and development workers. But it also had broader political effects in Sierra Leone, affecting what Sharon Stephens (1995) calls 'the cultural politics of childhood' and creating new subjectivities, especially for children and youth.

Contending Models of Human Rights

Let us take a step back and discuss some of the contending models of how 'universal' discourses such as child rights interact with particular local contexts. Mark Goodale, in his introduction to the volume *The Practice of Human Rights: Tracking Law Between the Global and the Local,* notes that

> different orientations to the problem of human rights as a normative category can be usefully placed on a spectrum of degrees of expansiveness. At one end of the spectrum … are the different variations of the view that 'human rights' refers to the body of international law… A somewhat more expansive orientation … consider[s] the ways in which the *concept* of human rights … is itself normative. [T]he other end of the spectrum … treat(s) human rights as one among several consequential transnational discourses. (2007: 6–8)

Goodale calls this last the discursive approach to human rights and argues that to conceptualize human rights as one among several key transnational discourses is to elevate social practice as both an analytical and methodological category. 'Discursive approaches to human rights assume that social practice is, in part, constitutive of the idea of human rights itself' (Goodale 2007: 8).

The discursive approach, with its focus on the importance of social practice, is much more satisfying to an anthropologist than a theory of simple norm diffusion that is totally top down and does not consider power in the analysis. It takes seriously the actions of the people on the ground who are the supposed targets of rights-based interventions. A social practice approach is also more satisfying than a theory of imposition that sees any kind of universal rights discourse as an imperialism of the West, ignoring the contributions of Africans themselves. Seeing rights discourse and practice as a form of neocolonialism or governmentality is also top-down but has the opposite problem of an exclusive focus on power.

Sally Engle Merry finds a happy medium by exploring 'the practice of human rights, focusing on where and how human rights concepts and institutions are produced, how they circulate, and how they shape everyday lives and actions' (Merry 2006b: 39). Her approach is built on the concept of individual translators, or intermediaries:[4]

> Intermediaries play a critical role in translating human rights concepts to make them relevant to local situations. These ideas become localized through the work of individuals who serve as translators between transnational and local arenas. They are people who hold a double consciousness, combining both human rights conceptions and local ways of thinking about grievances. They move between them, translating local

problems into human rights terms and human rights concepts into approaches to local problems. … On the one hand they have to speak the language of international human rights that the international donors prefer in order to get funds. On the other hand, they have to present their initiatives in cultural terms that will be acceptable to at least some of the local community. As they scramble for funds, they often need to select issues that the international donors are interested in, such as female genital cutting, women's empowerment, or trafficking, even though local populations may be more interested in clean drinking water, changed inheritance laws, or good roads (Merry 2006a: 229).

Merry's model, then, is that first human rights are localized through the work of good local translators, and then ideas about discourse and practice move around transnational networks. There is much to recommend this approach, but the model is still essentially top-down and maintains a polarization between the global centre and various local peripheries.[5] I want to move away from the idea that expertise comes from the top down and is imposed on locals (though that is certainly still the model in many Sierra Leonean villages I worked in). I do not want to lose what is useful about Merry's work on the vernacularization of rights, but at the end of Merry's work, one gets the feeling that the local folks, though active translators and hence agentive, cannot leave their locations. Local folks can have local knowledge, which is then taken up and used by the global apparatus. One gets the sense that locals may be moving ideas up hierarchies, especially ideas about how they have cleverly localized rights in their respective contexts, but that as representatives of the local, they have no chance to leave their spot on the ground. Merry admits as much, saying, 'Localizing human rights does not typically change the meaning and structure of human rights. The human rights approach retains its distinctive cultural conception of the person, embedded in the human rights documents, which values autonomy, security of the body, and equality' (Merry 2006a: 229).

Tentative Steps towards a New Approach

My search for another way of understanding what I was seeing in Sierra Leone has led me to *expertise*.[6] In my use of the term, I turn to scientific studies as a way of understanding the politics and social organization of the creation of expertise, and of addressing power head on.

What Is Expertise?

In a review of expertise for the Annual Reviews of Anthropology, Carr (2010) explains,

> Expertise is something people do rather than something people have or hold … (it) is inherently interactional because it involves the participation of objects, producers, and consumers of knowledge. … Expertise is always ideological because it is implicated in semistable hierarchies of value that authorize particular ways of seeing and speaking as expert. … These practices are routinized and organized as institutional boundaries are forged between different ways of knowing the very same thing, spawning the social configurations we call profession, craft, and discipline. (ibid.: 18)

This description resonates with my work on former child soldiers. Ethics for the care of children and models for their reintegration after social crisis already existed in postwar Sierra Leone, but they did not count as expert knowledge. They were local knowledge, or culture.

Carr also talks about naming practices that distinguish expert knowledge from everyday knowledge, and again, his description resonates with what happened around child protection and child rights in Sierra Leone. It was not that people did not know how to take care of their children, but that they were exposed to a new expert language to describe it, what I have called 'the Rites of the Child' (Shepler 2005b). As Mitchell (2002) argues, the rise of modern Egyptian technopolitical expertise would have been impossible without the figure of the Egyptian peasant as nonintellectual Other (cited in Carr 2010: 22). Similarly, child protection experts cannot exist without Africans who do not know how to protect their children.

But expertise is about more than creating and maintaining hierarchies. From a more philosophical direction, Harry Collins and Robert Evans' book *Rethinking Expertise* (2007) presents the 'Periodic Table of Expertises' and discusses ubiquitous and specialist expertises, meta-expertises and meta-criteria, ranging from 'beer mat knowledge' to technical connoisseurship. It includes experience, track record, certification, etc. They conclude that credentials are not a very useful means of judging expertise and find experience and track record to be better 'meta-criteria.'

What Is Child Protection Expertise?

Almost all child protection actors operate from a 'rights-based framework', but child protection expertise includes more than just knowledge of child rights. Child protection in conflict and postconflict settings is certainly also built on some disciplinary foundations: psychology, education, social work and so on. I have argued for the importance of ethnography in understanding the situation of child soldiers in child protection settings, but I am up against scholars such as Theresa Betancourt, who use psychological testing to diagnose post-traumatic stress disorder among former child soldiers (Betancourt et al. 2010). Betancourt's

work is emblematic of another type of expertise: clinical, for which Sierra Leone is a case of a more generalizable condition. She and her team move from case to case administering psychological protocols and diagnosing pathologies. This sort of expertise is undergirded by the medical model and the disciplinary institutions of the academy. Meanwhile, scholar-practitioners like Wessells (2007) and Boothby, Strang and Wessells (2006) apply a less 'scientific', more practice-based knowledge that grows out of the more practical disciplines of social work and social psychology.

However, since child protection in conflict and postconflict contexts is such a new field of endeavour, perhaps only a few decades old, a great deal of the expertise is based on practical experience. In only a limited number of cases has programming even been attempted, and most of the tacit knowledge undergirding child protection expertise is about what has worked and not worked in different places. Thus the building programmes in Sierra Leone ten years ago relied heavily on knowledge of what had been done in Mozambique, Uganda and Liberia (round one interventions).

One revealing example is the pressure that came from international child protection NGOs to find (and fund) Sierra Leonean healing rituals in an astounding conflation of all African contexts: since traditional healing rituals existed in Mozambique and Uganda, the NGOs reasoned, they must exist in Sierra Leone. Transnational child protection expertise assumed there would be 'local' ways of dealing with war-affected children across all African contexts. In the case of Sierra Leone there was no such healing ritual, my informants told me, but savvy local 'healers' were able to concoct a ritual that satisfied the international staff. The really revealing point is that the power asymmetry between the global and local models is so great that child protection expertise is not threatened by the adoption of 'traditional healing rituals' – on the contrary, putting the 'traditional' in its right place is an important part of its function. The logic of transnational child protection expertise undoes ethnographic specificity, conflating all 'local' settings.

Three Groups of People with Child Protection Expertise

In an effort to think through the various types of child protection expertise present in the case of former child soldiers in Sierra Leone, as well as those expertises' relationship to knowledge and experience, I have come up with a preliminary typology.

The first type of expertise – that of former child soldiers themselves – comes from personal experience. Certain former child soldiers, like Ishmael Beah (author of best seller *A Long Way Gone,* 2007, famously sold at Starbucks) and others, possess embodied expertise and have, in some ways, traded it on the child protection lecture circuit. Ishmael Beah became a poster boy for child soldiers as the Sierra Leone war became known for child soldiers, and a great many of the public's general ideas about what child soldiers need come from that book. They

are tokens in a way, but also powerful lobbying tools. I have recently been asked, by organizers of panels at places like the United States Institute of Peace, if I knew any former child soldiers for their panel: 'A girl, or someone with a disability would be even better!' The commodification of the former child soldier is a clear phenomenon, but it is not exactly what I am talking about.[7]

The second group of people with a claim to child protection expertise are employees of international child protection NGOs. For the most part they are Americans and Europeans, and they generally have the educational certification (though not always). But as I have noted above, child protection expertise is also very practical. It comes from a 'track record' of successfully implementing programmes. It operates on the currency of 'lessons learned' and 'best practices'. This group of experts has mobile knowledge. They move from context to context and have extensive transnational networks. They have put programmes into practice elsewhere. They showed up in Sierra Leone from postings in Mozambique and Uganda, and went on to postings in Liberia and Sri Lanka. Theirs is 'practical' knowledge.

The third group of experts, and those I am most interested in, are local NGO workers. Like Merry's translators, they use their so-called double consciousness to move back and forth between local expertise and, always in opposition to it, transnational expert knowledge. Within the devastated postwar Sierra Leonean economy, they are part of the new middle class, a professional NGO class whose professionalism is made possible only by international funding and transnational networks.

Of course there are other levels, including workers at smaller NGOs who try to access knowledge in order to access funds. Coulter (2004) has described these 'briefcase NGOs' in Sierra Leone. To the extent that they have managed to learn the language of child protection, representatives of local communities, headmen and schoolmasters also have gained a bit of expertise just by learning how to tell the NGOs and international NGOs (INGOs) what they want to hear. That is, they are somewhat less successful translators. They may have participated in a 'training of trainers.' They may be able to enumerate the victims in their community. INGOs have 'empowered' them, but only to a certain extent. 'Sensitization', the ubiquitous tool of norm diffusion, is supposed to spread child rights knowledge but still maintains the boundaries between local knowledge and expert knowledge (Shepler 2005b).

How Does Expertise Work?

Expertise involves, among other things, the establishment of asymmetries among people and between people and objects. It creates boundaries between expert and non-expert knowledge (even if they are very close in content). For example, while the war was still ongoing in the late 1990s before international NGOs were seriously active, local NGOs such as Christian Brothers and Children Affected by War were doing child protection activities their own way, building on pre-

existing programmes for street kids and orphanages, and often making do with very little by drawing on Sierra Leonean models of child protection like child fosterage. Though in many ways they were doing the job in better, more sustainable ways before the international players arrived, they were outspent and out-expertised when actors such as UNICEF, Save the Children and the International Rescue Committee arrived. In Sierra Leone, expertise bore a certain international imprimatur. Should we see this state of affairs as primarily the imposition of the 'Western' way of doing things, simply as power? I believe there is more going on.

Individual Career Trajectories and Actor Networks

Perhaps I can best illustrate this relationship between local and international expertise with an example. My friend Mohammed[8] and my Sierra Leonean husband taught together at the same secondary school in the early 1980s. Mohammed went on to run a local NGO in Sierra Leone for former child soldiers, and was a skilled translator of transnational forms and of local knowledge. He eventually left Sierra Leone to put his child protection expertise to work for UNICEF in Afghanistan (which at the time had great need of staff but little appeal as a destination). After that, he was transferred to several other African postings. What are the components of Mohammed's child protection expertise?

Certainly he learned a lot from his experience in Sierra Leone as the head of a successful child protection NGO, but I believe it was his ability as a translator that made his international career possible. As I said earlier, understandings of local contexts in a handful of national cases form the knowledge base of this relatively new field; therefore being Sierra Leonean is an important part of Mohammed's expertise. Sierra Leone's disarmament, demobilization and rehabilitation programmes for children have been deemed successful and are now models for others. The structure of child protection expertise enables this by conflating all local knowledge, as already discussed. Once Mohammed grasped local knowledge in one setting, he could then move seamlessly to another 'local' context and in some ways continue to represent 'the local' in a different national context. Mohammed can trade on his Sierra Leone experiences, and also his Sierra Leonean-ness, not as a token but as part of what we might call an actor-network (Latour 1987). Understanding his experience allows us to move beyond Merry's model of locals forever stuck 'on the ground' in their own settings. Mohammed was a skilled translator but also a mobile actor, contributing to an evolving body of child protection expertise as he moved.

Conclusion

One could argue that this whole chapter is based on the observation that a skilful Sierra Leonean got a job with the UN that he would not have got, had war not

come to his country. There are no grand conclusions here; I have only reframed my original questions about what happens at the intersection of global and local models of childhood by shifting my focus to the nature of transnational child protection expertise to ask whether and how local-level expertise can move in that system. What are the conditions in which individual Sierra Leoneans make use of or contribute to that system? How often are Sierra Leoneans able to act in ways other than representing 'local knowledge'? And how, therefore, does transnational expertise work to replicate existing power relations or create new challenges to existing power relations?

One thing is clear: Sierra Leone is the type of 'case' of child protection on which expertise is built. Sierra Leone is now a node in child-protection actor networks. Sierra Leone, as a laboratory of the most traumatized kids, has a new kind of capital. The dance therapy practitioner goes there to work with a set of war-traumatized youth. The psychological tests woman goes there to design and test her trauma protocols. The participatory research with girl mothers happens there. Others (e.g., Kanyako 2010) have written about the effects of aid flows directed towards reconstruction in postwar Sierra Leone. I want to ask how Sierra Leone has been affected by transnational flows of 'expertise'.

The actor-network model is a good extension of Merry's work because it allows for more creative energy from the bottom up and sees all the participants in the 'global assemblage' (Collier and Ong 2005) as active participants in its creation. Translators are no longer stuck in one location, but they are in some ways stuck being representatives of 'the local', even when they move to different localities. Clearly there is more research to be done on this topic. These are just preliminary thoughts towards a reframing of a research agenda. I believe the next step is to take Merry further and, after accounting for the various particularities of the localization of different sorts of human rights in different locations, to go beyond the relatively top-down model by focusing more on the kinds of moves (for individuals, but also for ideas and practices) that are possible within those various actor networks.

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Notes

1. See Shepler (2010a) for more detail on these and other 'firsts' in child protection for children affected by war.
2. Since 2001 Child Protection Officers have been posted with Peacekeeping Operations in Sierra Leone, Burundi, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Afghanistan, Côte d'Ivoire, Liberia, Haiti and the Sudan. See http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/issues/children/cpa.shtml for more information.
3. Office of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict, 'Mainstreaming the Issue of Children and Armed Conflict'. Retrieved 25 September 2011 from http://www.un.org/children/conflict/english/mainstreaming.html.
4. See also Bierschenk, Chauveau and Olivier de Sardan (2002) on 'local development brokers'.
5. Merry acknowledges this to some extent: 'The term *local* is, of course, deeply problematic here, as is its oppositional twin *global*. In the context of discussions of transnationalism, local tends to stand for lack of mobility, wealth, education, and cosmopolitanism, as well as recalcitrant particularity, whereas global encompasses the ability to move across borders, to adopt universal moral frameworks, and to share in the affluence, education, and cosmopolitan awareness of elites from other parts of the world' (Merry 2006b: 39).
6. This move is in some ways driven by my time as an Assistant Professor in Washington, DC, and the omnipresent insistence on 'policy relevance'. As a new participant in various child protection networks that include donors and practitioners, I encountered an unfamiliar knowledge economy and discovered I was an 'expert'. I was even invited to talk about my work at the United Nations by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General on Children and Armed Conflict, a moment when I most felt a part of transnational child protection expertise.
7. I have spoken elsewhere about the uses of the child soldier narrative in Shepler (2006); see also Meyers (2009) and Coundouriotis (2010).
8. A pseudonym to protect confidentiality.

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Part IV

Interregional Integration

Chapter 13

The 'Mandingo Question'

Transnational Ethnic Identity and Violent Conflict in an Upper Guinea Coast Border Area

Christian K. Højbjerg

This chapter is not available in the open access edition due to rights restrictions. It is accessible in the print and retail e-book editions, spanning pages 255–279.

Chapter 14

Solo Darboe,
Former Diamond Dealer

Transnational Connections
and Home Politics in
the Twentieth-Century Gambia

Alice Bellagamba

British colonial sources of the 1930s make reference to diamond smuggling in the Colony and Protectorate of the Gambia. However, only in the 1990s did the key role of the Gambia in the diamond trade begin to receive attention due to international efforts to regulate the rough-diamond market and disband the illicit commercial networks that supported conflicts in Sierra Leone, Liberia, Côte d'Ivoire and Guinea-Conakry (Gberie 2009: 75; Smillie 2010: 189–90).[1] Published in 2004, the bestseller *Blood Diamonds* by journalist Greg Campbell mentions the resettlement of major Gambian diamond dealers in their home country after Charles Taylor toppled the Liberian regime of Samuel Doe in 1989. What Campbell and other analysts left undiscussed is how this return migration of the 1990s followed well-trodden paths laid by the movement of trade and labour forces between the Gambia River and Sierra Leone in earlier decades.

Pervasive Mande surnames such as Ceesay, Fofanna, Dumbuyaa and Darboe (Howard 1976; Skinner 1978; Howard and Skinner 1984) betray the common precolonial history of these two regions, whose socioeconomic and political integration was consolidated by the development of the cola trade in the nineteenth century (Curtin 1975: 228–29; White 1981) and by the fact that for several decades British possessions along the Gambia River (the most important of which was Bathurst, established at the river mouth in 1816) were administered as a dependency of Sierra Leone (Gray 1966: 366–78, 457–65). Some of the Bathurst African traders had strong ties to Sierra Leone. One was Joseph D. Richards (Hughes and Perfect 2008: 189–90), who was born in Freetown in 1843 and became a crucial actor in the development of commercial networks between Bathurst and the interior of the Senegambia in the second half of the

nineteenth century (Mbodji 1992: 216–17). The migration of the 1950s, in which thousands of rural Gambian youths sought their fortune in the diamond fields of Sierra Leone, was another phase in the long-term history of economic, social and political connections between the Gambia River and Sierra Leone. During that period, news that the Sierra Leonean government had opened up diamond-mining activities to small-scale operators (Swindell 1975: 182) spread rapidly throughout West Africa (Bredeloup 2007: 65ff.). As for the Gambia River area, the rush to the diamond fields marked the beginning of the international diaspora, as many of the men who arrived in Sierra Leone in the 1950s then travelled to Congo, Zaire, Liberia and finally Angola in the following decades (Gaibazzi 2010). This chapter takes its cue from the life trajectory of Solo Darboe, a former diamond dealer born in the upper Gambia in the 1930s, to illustrate this early transnational aspect of twentieth-century Gambian history. I collected Solo's life reminiscences in 2008 with the help of Bakary Sidibeh, who for many years was my mentor and research partner in the Gambia. In the years that followed, I met many of Solo's mates (elderly men such as Omar Suso, a close friend and working partner of Solo) and supplemented oral sources with the available written evidence. Such an exercise of historical reconstruction has broader methodological implications. Philip Curtin (1975) and Boubacar Barry (1998) have promoted the integrated analysis of precolonial Senegambia in terms of its commercial and cultural relationships with Europe, the Americas and the regions that are today part of Mauritania, Mali, Guinea-Conakry and Guinea-Bissau. Historians of the colonial and postcolonial period have instead opted for 'methodological nationalism' – i.e., the tendency to frame the analysis mostly in terms of national boundaries (Wimmer and Glick-Schiller 2003). By probing into the micro-level of Solo's life trajectory, this chapter attempts to introduce a transnational dimension into the study of the late colonial and postcolonial Gambia, a country that many scholars tend to overlook precisely because of its small size. In so doing, the analysis touches on the crucial role of the first twentieth-century waves of international migrations in the very process of African nation-building.

As a Beginning: Family Ancestry

My conversations with Solo took place in Bakau New Town. The desirable location and comfortable solidity of his house testified to the wealth of its owner. Bakau is an old coastal village that the British brought under their control during the 1840s. Like other peri-urban areas around the capital city of Banjul, Bakau New Town evolved in the 1970s thanks to increased rural-to-urban migration and investment by the first generation of Gambian civil servants and rich businessmen like Solo. Both Solo and Bakary Sidibeh, who was the intermediary for our encounters, were important actors in the decolonization process. Even if the political historiography of the Gambia barely mentions this detail (Hughes and

Perfect 2006: 136–38), Sidibeh was among the founders of the political movement that brought about the establishment of the Protectorate People's Party in 1959, whose name was changed to the People's Progressive Party (PPP) shortly before the first national elections of 1960. Its leader was Dawda Jawara, son of a wealthy rural trader. With support from the colonial government, Jawara was educated in Scotland, and when he returned to the Gambia he was appointed head of the veterinary service. After the 1962 national elections, the PPP assumed leadership of the country (Hughes and Perfect 2006; Bellagamba 2008), and in October 1963, upon the attainment of self-government, Jawara was appointed prime minister. That year Solo married Jawara's niece, Fatouma Almami. With the Republican Referendum of 1970, Jawara became the first president of the Gambia. He remained in office until the 1994 military coup that led to the election of Yaya Jammeh, the coup's leader, as the new president of the Gambia in 1996.

When I encountered Solo, the news that Jawara (2009) was working on his autobiography had just spread among his former supporters and age-mates. Solo, who had switched his allegiance to the opposition in the early 1970s after years of providing financial support to Jawara and the PPP, felt that his experience also deserved attention. His self-narrative started with the assertion 'We are people with history'.[2] That statement was instrumental in re-marking the boundary between Solo and other members of the twentieth-century Gambian elite, who unlike him could not so easily claim high birth and a historical pedigree. Such was the case of Jawara, whose affiliation with the professional endogamous group of leatherworkers was rumoured from the beginning of his political career (Hughes and Perfect 2006: 136–37).

Similar to the Bayo, Ceesay, Danso, Fofanna and Signateh, the Darboe are *jula*, which means they belong to the precolonial elite of freeborn traders, Islamic scholars and warriors (Curtin 1975: 68–75; Galloway 1974). The Darboe family trace their history to their roots in the Casamance village of Tendindi, where their Malian ancestors are said to have first settled during their movement towards the Atlantic coast (Wright 1977: 38). The settlements established by the Darboe in the Gambia River Valley strategically intersected with the indigenous and Euro-African trading networks that crossed the Senegambia from north to south and from east to west.

Solo's home village is Brifu, in the Gambian area of the precolonial kingdom of Wuli, not far from the wharves of Wuli Passimass and Yarbutenda, which are mentioned by early European sources on the upper river (Reeve 1912: 131–32). The wealth of Solo's great-grandparents was derived as much from agriculture as from the slave and gold trades, whereas his father, Saloum Darboe, engaged in groundnut cultivation and the cattle trade, as was typical during the early colonial period. Solo grew up in the trading tradition of his family. In accordance with customary values, he was raised to be self-disciplined, hardworking and forward-looking. In that conception of life, a young freeman such as Solo

had to be physically and morally strong as well as ambitious and adventurous to carve out a livelihood. Economic responsibility towards the extended family was a priority, as was the cultivation of leadership aspirations. Like other rural boys, Solo learned to farm and to respect his elders. As befitted his ancestry, he was also initiated into the ways of trade.[3] When he was fifteen, his father supported his first commercial venture by entrusting him with a small amount of capital with which to enter into petty trade. Solo travelled to Bathurst and headed homeward with a stock of cigarettes, mints, biscuits and other easily transportable items, which he meant to smuggle across the Senegalese border. His first trip, however, was a failure – customs officers confiscated all of his goods. When he decided in 1953 to travel to Sierra Leone, his father denied him further financial support because Solo had lost the initial investment to the customs officers. Money came instead from his mother, who sold some of her cattle in order to help her son. Thus began Solo's transnational life, during which he visited and lived in several African countries as well as Belgium and Israel.

Early Sierra Leonean Adventures

Colonial sources on the Upper River Division of the Gambia reported the attraction the Sierra Leone diamond fields held for young men in the 1950s.[4] To be sure, poverty was one of the factors driving them out of their villages. In many areas of rural Gambia, a 'hungry season' before the new harvest was the rule (Swindell and Jeng 2006: 59; David 1980), and one of Solo's age-mates once explained to me how 'difficult it was to stay in the village, if you had nothing'.[5] Family members, friends and other villagers expected young men to contribute to the betterment of the community. Those who could not, or did not show adequate commitment to hard work, were quickly isolated and treated with contempt. Meanwhile, many young men resented the strict social control typical of village life and the labour demands that the government and chiefs imposed on them, such as the maintenance of roads after the rains. Places like 1950s Sierra Leone, or 1960s Congo Brazzaville and Kinshasa, which many international migrants reached after leaving Sierra Leone, were seen as gateways to a more cosmopolitan lifestyle (Abdul-Korah 2008: 2; Hannerz 1992: 228).[6] After successfully obtaining a travel permit from the British official in charge of the upper Gambia River, Solo left his home village. At that time, migrants reached Sierra Leone by either riding the postal service ship between Bathurst and Freetown or following the old commercial routes connecting the Upper Gambia to Sierra Leone across the plains of Fouta Djallon. Travellers did not like to cross Guinea-Bissau; the despotic nature of Portuguese colonialism and the regime of forced labour it had in place were notorious throughout the region. Solo followed the road through Fouta Djallon to reach the eastern part of Sierra Leone, not far from the border with Liberia. The town was Baima, a locality on the 'Mende

Line' railway that connected Freetown to south-eastern Sierra Leone. For trains headed eastward, Baima was the last station before Pendembu, which was located at the intersection of the roads leading to Guinea-Conakry and across the Liberian border. In the span of a few years, the population of the nearby diamond areas of Kono, Kenema and Bo districts grew fifteenfold, from five to seventy-five thousand inhabitants (Stevens 1984: 164). The economy was vibrant; shops full of goods, new houses and cars were evidence of the prosperity linked to the diamond industry.

> My first destination was Baima Station on Mende Line. I had one hundred pounds, and I gave fifty pounds to my 'brother' to keep so that I could invest the rest in diamond mining. After one month, there was no positive result. I returned to my 'brother' to collect my money, as I wanted to start a small business. But the man was twisting and turning me around by saying 'come tomorrow', until I realized he had 'chopped' [misused] my money. I took up *barañini* work to survive. I was then told that somebody was looking for help to cut two hundred trees and that he was ready to pay six pounds for the job. I went and asked for a cutlass. I worked hard to cut all the two hundred trees as fast as I could and I carried them on my head. The man was surprised and asked me whether I had gone crazy. He had another labourer whom he used to pay three pounds per month. So, the man continued, how could I pretend to do the job so quickly and be paid the equivalent of two months' salary? He gave me only three pounds and I said: 'If you want to pay me only three pounds, it is up to you! I will leave it with God!'[7] With these three pounds I bought cigarettes to resell. I continued to serve as a porter, carrying bags of rice on my head. They used to pay me three pence. I made gradual savings until I rebuilt my initial capital of fifty pounds.[8]

Barañini (literally 'job-seeker') is a Mandingo and Bambara word used primarily in the colonial Sahel to identify migrant unskilled labourers (Meillassoux 1965: 140). In the Gambia, it described the young men who served as porters along the river and at the Bathurst harbour during the trading season, from November to May, when the harvest was over and people moved out of the villages in search of labour opportunities. Young Gambians were ready to work hard to earn money to support their families and achieve social autonomy; however, they preferred to do it far from their home communities, where menial jobs were often viewed as those filled by the lowest strata of society, such as former slaves and people of slave ancestry. Seasonal farming during the rains or working as *barañini* in colonial centres after the end of the agricultural season helped overcome status barriers and related behavioural codes: 'the foreign land', a local proverb goes, 'does not know about your good origins, but it can recognize a man of value'.[9]

This wisdom applied to freed slaves and slave descendants, who desired to hide their ancestry far from their communities, as well as to freemen like Solo, who in Sierra Leone had to endure forms of humiliation that would have been unacceptable at home.

As a newcomer, Solo relied on the help of a 'brother', a very loose Mandinka expression that may be used to identify a blood relative or simply a person hailing from the same village. Relationships between immigrants and Sierra Leoneans were structured along the principles of the landlord/stranger relation, which had dominated long-distance trading diasporas for centuries. Upon arriving in a new area, an immigrant (or a trader) had to find a landlord who could provide him with lodging, protection and advice in exchange for labour, material support and loyalty. The system was based on trust (Zack-Williams 1995; Bredeloup 2007), but agreements were not always honoured, as Solo rapidly discovered. Newcomers had to adjust to the dynamic, rough-and-ready environment of diamond-mining areas full of unscrupulous middlemen and hundreds of thousands of equally ambitious young men. Selfish and opportunistic behaviour was the rule more than the exception. Anything could happen, from death – as when men illegally dove into creeks at night in search of diamonds[10] – to unexpected strokes of luck. Solo continued to seek out opportunities. The story of how he got his first diamond – one he surely has told time and again to friends and relatives – clearly refers to the diamond-smuggling networks between Sierra Leone and Monrovia, the capital of Liberia.

> As I did not know diamonds, I established connections with a man in the bush. One day this man showed me a diamond, which according to him was worth fifteen hundred pounds. I bargained and bargained until I obtained it for thirty-five pounds, but I was not sure of the real value of the stone. In town, I sold it for one thousand and five hundred pounds to a man, who gave me five hundred pounds in advance, and said he would bring the rest after having resold the diamond in Liberia. After two, three days he was back and gave me my money. With that, I started buying and selling diamonds until I had about thirty-five thousand pounds in Monrovia.[11]

After the discovery of Sierra Leonean diamonds in the 1930s, Liberia became a major diamond exporter, although its government never published reliable statistics on its internal production (Greenhalgh 1985: 204). The stones came mostly from Sierra Leone, following the nineteenth-century patterns of trade between the two regions (Rosen 1973: 99–100). Omar Suso, Solo's best friend in those days, took on the risky activity of transporting diamonds to Monrovia, which he recalled in 2008 when I asked him to talk about his early days with Solo in Sierra Leone:

Solo used to tell me: 'You know the place where we can sell this dia-
mond. We got it for two thousand dollars, go quickly to Monrovia'. That
was how I smuggled diamonds into Monrovia. In those days, the police
were vigilant, especially when they saw a person travelling to Monrovia.
Most of the diamond buyers were in Monrovia. There was a thick forest
along the road, and a small hamlet in the bush called Foday Camara,
which was already in Liberia. The last Sierra Leone village towards that
area was located near a river at the border between Sierra Leone and
Guinea. When you reached there, you would board a Land Rover; but
only few traders ventured to Liberia by land as they would be searched
'from head to foot'. Police would take off your trousers to search for
diamonds. If they found any, you would be arrested. For me, I always
pretended to be the drivers' apprentice. Both Solo and I were very young
at the time. I used to dress like an apprentice. When we reached the
police station I would hold on to the back of the vehicle without taking
a seat inside. I used to do this with diamonds on me. I would then jump
down and say to the police: 'Quick, we want to go!' They would push
me aside and say: 'Go away!' Sometimes, I made two, three trips like this
in one month, leaving people behind to spend several days before they
could reach Monrovia.[12]

According to Omar's account, stones were acquired directly from miners or
from small-time intermediaries who commuted between the forest areas and the
town of Bo, where Solo eventually settled: 'When he took the diamond, he would
say: "I will be back with your money soon"'. Diamonds were resold in Monrovia,
where, Omar said, there were only three diamond-buying offices, one of which
was owned by the Diamond Corporation, the De Beers branch established in
1929 to manage the supply and trade of rough diamonds (Bredeloup 2007: 36ff.).
Money paid to Solo was immediately transferred to his London bank account, and
from London it then wended its way back to Sierra Leone. This strategy helped
circumvent police investigations: as Omar explained, 'The government of Sierra
Leone did not enquire about the source of money coming from London'.[13]
    In addition to those who obtained a license to sell and exchange diamonds
after the partial liberalization of the diamond market by the Sierra Leone govern-
ment in 1956, the diamond trade made use of innumerable unlicensed diamond
diggers, supporters, distributors and intermediaries (Bredeloup 2007: 108). The
Lebanese and Jewish trading diaspora played an important role in the system.
Beirut wealth during the late 1950s and 1960s was 'rumored to derive from
Sierra Leone profits' (Greenhalgh 1985: 248). Tel Aviv was another important
node in the world diamond-trading network, as was London, where many of
the Jewish diamond dealers of Antwerp had moved after the outbreak of World
War II (Bredeloup 2007: 108–10). Solo's ability to recognize good stones rapidly

attracted the attention of Jewish intermediaries linked to the Diamond Corporation. 'I was not employed', Solo emphasized in our conversations, 'but only incorporated as a consultant because of my lack of Western education. I dealt with the Corporation for over forty years. They were buying from me and I was advising them on the values of the diamonds coming to their office'.[14]

In only a few years, Solo became a grass-roots agent able to gain the trust of African diamond dealers and pass the rough diamonds over to the legal market. His stay in Sierra Leone, however, turned out to be short-lived. Solo and Omar were lucky to escape the 1956 'Operation Parasite', which drove some forty-five thousand foreigners from Kono, one of the major diamond areas (Rosen 1973: 85ff.). But in 1961, Milton Margai's government expelled them along with Bassirou Jawara, another Gambian diamond dealer and a friend of Solo, who like Solo was to become a diamond magnate. Solo, Bassirou and Omar returned to the Gambia, where the political struggle for independence was escalating.

Stranger or Citizen? National Politics on Stage

According to Omar, the arrest of Solo and Bassirou happened at the same time as the arrests of Siaka Stevens and many of his supporters on the eve of Sierra Leone's independence (Cartwright 1970: 70–71). Stevens was the leader of the All People's Congress and an opponent of Milton Margai's government. For some years he had served as minister of mines, land and labour, and his intimate knowledge of miners and diamond dealers had alerted him to the political potential of the many immigrants who were living in very difficult conditions in the diamond areas, a detail that is also mentioned in his autobiography (Stevens 1984; Smillie, Gberie and Hazleton 2001: 41–43). When recalling the story of his arrest, Solo described himself as among Stevens's many followers:

> In 1961, Milton Margai, first Prime Minister of Sierra Leone, deported me. Because I am not a Sierra Leonean, I did not like politics. I like one man only … a retired police sergeant, who formed a party, Siaka Stevens, I gave him so many Land Rovers, so much money, that Milton said, 'Solo, you cannot stay in Sierra Leone' and he deported me. When Milton died and Siaka Stevens's party won, then I was in Israel, and Siaka brought me back to Sierra Leone.[15]

Milton Margai died in 1964 and was succeeded by his brother, Albert Margai. Stevens won the 1967 election but was then deposed in a coup aimed at reinstating Albert Margai. However, in 1968 Stevens was able to regain power. The expansion of the illicit diamond networks during his government, which lasted until 1985, and his ability to cultivate personal connections with major diamond dealers are a well-documented aspect of Sierra Leonean history.

A consistent motif of Solo's account is the place of migrants in these early 1960s political transformations. When highlighting the role of migrations in the development of Ghanaian nationalistic feelings, Meyer Fortes (1971) referred specifically to the Ghanaian elite educated in Europe. The same holds true for many other African countries, whose initial cohorts of politicians were educated abroad. Politics also impacted the hundreds of thousands of illiterate rural migrants like Solo, who experienced the on-the-ground implications of national identities while abroad in the course of the late 1950s and early 1960s. If Solo were to delineate his family legacy, Sierra Leone was rightly his second homeland: both the Upper Gambia and Sierra Leone were British territories ruled by a hierarchy of British officials and native chiefs, where there were speakers of Mandingo, Solo's mother tongue, and people bearing his surname. Travelling to Liberia, he could follow the paths of Mande-speaking commercial diasporas and integrate into the vibrant Mande-speaking trading community of Monrovia. Almost overnight, Sierra Leone's independence created a new geography of power based on national belonging. Interestingly, the first historical and sociological literature on the place of 'strangers' in African societies developed immediately after the birth of the new nations (Peil 1971; Shack and Skinner 1979), when the commercial networks and the mobile labour force that had prospered in the colonial empires had to readjust to the enforcement of national boundaries.

Men like Solo found themselves involved in a variety of political transactions. Both abroad and at home, politicians courted the social and material wealth of these businessmen, which they needed to support the emergent political machinery (Morgenthau 1979).

In addition to supporting Siaka Stevens, Solo cultivated his own social presence in the Gambia. 'Build your place first!' is a Gambian saying that has become popular since international migration became an avenue to social mobility in the second half of the twentieth century. Solo's first investment in social respectability was his father's pilgrimage to Mecca in 1958. The second was to marry Fatoumata Barro, the maternal cousin whom his parents had chosen to be his wife. Marriage was the gateway to maturity, and migration helped young men to speed up the process by earning enough to assume the marital expenses, a phenomenon that colonial officials commented upon as early as the 1890s.[16] In 1959, the same year in which the PPP was formed, Solo travelled to the Gambia in order to bring Fatoumata to Sierra Leone. Political discussions, which in the first part of the 1950s had been the preserve of the educated elite of Bathurst, expanded to the rural areas, and the PPP, like Stevens's All People's Congress in Sierra Leone and other African parties of that period, cultivated populist promises of equality and progress for all, regardless of social differences.

Like other prominent families of the Protectorate, branches of the Darboe supported the United Party (UP), which had been established in 1954 by a Bathurst lawyer, Pierre N'jie (Hughes and Perfect 2008: 124). The UP was strong

in the upper river region, but the overall political situation in that area of the country was complicated by the many instances of change that criss-crossed society at various levels. The PPP's candidate for the Wuli-Sandu constituency in 1960 was Mussa Darboe, a distant relative of Solo. This explains the early interest of Solo and the Darboe of Wuli in the PPP. When Solo returned to the Gambia in 1961, the party had already gained its first victory and was preparing for the second national election of 1962. Expulsion from Sierra Leone had taught Solo and other migrants of those days that good political connections at home could serve them well in case of problems with their host countries abroad as well as in the Gambia, where they were investing the profits of their migrations and using the judiciary to defend their business interests. Successful migrants like Solo strove for a social and political presence in the capital city of Bathurst and its elite circles. Not only did cities offer the returnees those facilities to which they had become accustomed abroad, but the emergence of the new nation was turning Bathurst into a hub where national policies were decided, resources shared and contracts signed.

In 1963, as I said above, Solo took Jawara's niece as his second wife. This marriage sanctioned his allegiance with the Gambia's emergent national power bloc. Personal relationships with national political elites became an important part of his transnational life, indirectly testifying to the strict interactions between business minorities and politics in the wake of African independences (Jalloh 2007: 90),[17] and to the commitment of African presidents with respect to the growth of 'shadow' states – that is, patrimonial networks interlaced with the formal institutions of the state (Reno 1999, 2000; Ferguson 2006: 39).

In that same year of 1963, Solo established himself in Congo Brazzaville. Since the early colonial period the capital had hosted an important West African trading community (Balandier 1955; Bredeloup 2007: 1959; Whitehouse 2007). Solo and other West African men coming from the Sierra Leone diamond fields used already existing West African trading networks to develop smuggling activities within the former Belgian Congo, which at the time held a large share of the world's diamond production (Bredeloup 1994: 82; MacGaffey 1987: 121–22).

In Brazzaville, Solo had a license to buy diamonds. Omar and other Gambians he had known in Sierra Leone served as couriers across the border with Congo Leopoldville. Solo's first wife played a part as well, as Omar recalled:

> Because of the difficulties of access to Congo Brazzaville we used to take planes from Leopoldville to Lagos, and then back from Lagos to Brazzaville. The president of Congo Brazzaville was named Massemba-Débat. Massemba and Solo were close friends as 'honey and honey producer'.[18] Solo was so popular that many thought he was one of the President's closest associates. He was given security guards for the compound, and the key to the large safety box, where he kept the currency (franc CFA,

dollars and pounds) that was in the hands of Fatoumata, his first wife. When Solo negotiated the price of a diamond, Fatoumata would take out the money.[19]

At that time, West African diamond dealers were taking advantage of the weakened control over the diamond trade that followed Congo's independence from Belgium in 1960, and of the development of clandestine diamond mining in Eastern Kasai (MacGaffey 1987: 122–23). This favourable situation ended with the rise to power of Mobutu Sese Seko, who began to install those loyal to him into the system in order to gain control over it (Smillie 2010: 121–22). Solo left Brazzaville – having lost his political patronage after the overthrow of Massemba-Débat in 1968 – and added Belgium and Israel to his transnational life experience: 'I was the only African in Tel Aviv who had a diamond trading office. Usually I got to the airport, took the diamonds from my customers and declared them to customs'.[20] In 1972 he opened an office in Monrovia. In one way or another – he could not specifically recall how it had come about – while in Sierra Leone he had established a friendly relationship with Sékou Touré, the president of Guinea-Conakry. Once again, diamonds were the reason for that friendship, as presumably Solo was participating in the illicit diamond transactions carried out by Touré and members of his extended family.[21] Touré introduced him to William Tolbert, the Liberian president whose favouritism towards Mande-speaking minorities is well known (Konneh 1996: 149), and Solo settled in Monrovia. With Solo's relationship with the Gambia compromised after the 1981 attempted coup against Jawara's government, and Solo himself, according to his own account, suspected of playing a role in the conspiracy, it proved a providential time to leave the Gambia and draw upon Sékou Touré's friendship. A few years before, Solo had withdrawn from the PPP to become an active member and financial supporter of the National Convention Party (NCP), an opposition party established in 1975 by Sheriff Dibba, who had been a founding member of the PPP and the first vice president of the Gambia (Hughes and Perfect 2006: 191).[22]

Never Really at Home

Solo's passion for politics is revealed by the nicknames of three of his sons: Reagan, Sékou Touré and Sheriff Dibba. Solo's relations with Dibba developed in the context of popular dissatisfaction with the PPP in the early 1970s and rising concerns among the Mandinka regarding Jawara's policy of assimilation of other ethnic groups into the government (Hughes and Perfect 2006: 187–90). No doubt Solo felt and acted like a Mandingo nationalist proudly defending his culture and language. It was in the 1970s that the Gambia's economic problems started to come to the fore. Urban suburbs had swollen as a consequence of intensified mi-

gration from rural areas, and the state's administrative apparatus – despite its significant growth (Sallah 1990: 628) – could not provide enough white-collars jobs for the increasing numbers of literate youths, who looked to Europe, the United States and Libya in search of better educational and employment opportunities. Electoral politics had turned into an instrument to guarantee the continuity of the political circles established at the time of independence. No room was left for innovative thinking and action besides what the PPP and its politicians needed to remain in power.

Solo was a transnational migrant, but the rest of his family aimed at maintaining their long-term social and political influence in the Upper Gambia. One of his younger brothers had political aspirations, and apparently the PPP had withdrawn its support of his candidacy for Member of Parliament for the Wuli constituency in the 1977 elections (Hughes and Perfect 2006: 191). Solo reacted by shifting his allegiance to the NCP and provided this new party with access to a secure source of financing for political rallies and propaganda to support his brother there. At the time, Solo's material and social capital was impressive. While abroad, he kept in touch with expatriate Gambians and helped those in difficulty. Locally, his family network spread at the regional and transregional levels. Moreover, he had been investing in his home village since the beginning of his diamond-dealing career by paying the taxes of a large number of people and by providing food when they were in need. In the eyes of his countrymen, Solo came across as a hero, deftly able to tap the riches of foreign nations. His first return from Sierra Leone, in 1961, was still remembered by his age-mates as recently as 2008. Solo and his friend Bassirou Jawara were each driving a brand-new car, which stoked the imagination of their compatriots. Only a few years later, this time back from Congo Brazzaville, Solo patronized the band Super Eagles, whose music spread from Banjul nightclubs to the international stage.[23]

This display of success and cosmopolitan connections was in sharp contrast to the distress of 1970s rural and urban Gambia (Nyang 1977; Sallah 1990). Recurrent droughts and badly organized government intervention had struck heavy blows to the agricultural sector, which still constituted the main source of income for large segments of the population. Inflation had turned life in towns into a never-ending struggle to make ends meet, and people were leaving the rural areas to settle in the rapidly growing urban centres.

In 1977 Solo organized the NCP campaign, and his younger brother contested the Wuli constituency under the flag of the new party (Hughes and Perfect 2006: 191–94). The NCP, however, never achieved the results that its founder, and Solo, expected. It proved hard indeed to undermine the popularity of the PPP as the party that had achieved independence. The PPP's patronage resources, moreover, were far more dependable than those of the NCP. In his explanation of these events, Solo mentioned a letter that Jawara purportedly wrote to him, which contained one sentence that Solo would never forget: 'You are a king without a

land!' The meaning becomes clearer in the light of Solo's common expression 'I am the king of the world', used when he boasted about his adventures abroad. By adding 'without a land', Jawara put things in the different perspective. Solo's transnational life was both a resource and a hindrance. Surely, his connections to different places in the world increased his social and moral stature by comparison with those compatriots who had never had the opportunity to leave the Gambia, but his absences undermined his ability to establish roots in the thickly connected environment of home politics. It was Binta Cham, his youngest wife, who clearly spelled out this point by interjecting, during one of my conversations with Solo:

> You can live with Gambians outside, they would not care about you. You will see them only when they are in need. Here, at home, they also do not care. When you return and you visit them, they will start the conversation by saying, 'When did you arrive? When are you going to leave?' They talk as if you do not belong to this country.

Transnational theory has shown how migrants' investments in their home country have fed long-distance nationalism (Glick-Schiller and Fouron 2001). This applies to Solo and other migrants of his generation who, while making a point of cultivating patriotism, were also subject to the tenuous nature of relationships between the Gambian state and its diasporic citizenry. The social and material capital of migrants was welcomed as long as it aligned with the incumbent leader; however, the very fact that Solo was accused of participation in the 1981 coup against Jawara shows that migrants' use of their resources to support political alternatives prompted a much different reaction from the government. Behind the mask of an extremely successful life, Solo's trajectory therefore betrays a feeling that he never fully belonged to his home country. Of all the political connections he established during his career as a diamond dealer, the friendship with Sékou Touré is the only one I heard him describe nostalgically; further, he evinced an enduring admiration for this man, whom he affectionately called 'my African President number one'. For the rest, by 2008 – like many men of his generation who truly believed in the transformative power of national politics during their youth – he had reached the conclusion that politics and politicians were not worth any further financial, social or moral engagement. Both Jawara and Dibba had disillusioned him. His relationship with Dibba had ended before the 1992 national elections, when Solo was expelled from the NCP. From Dibba's point of view, Solo's independent attitude was undermining the cohesiveness of the party; from Solo's perspective – which the opposition newspaper *Foroyaa* duly documented – Dibba had mismanaged NCP financial resources.

For those elections Solo backed a newly established and small political party, the People's Democratic Party, whose existence was abruptly terminated by the

political ban proclaimed by the military junta after the 1994 coup. Solo left the Gambia again. At this time Angola was liberalizing diamond mining and trading operations (Bredeloup 2007: 43). Solo tried to become a key player once again in a new diamond frontier, but he was not as successful as he used to be. Angola marked the end of his adventures as a diamond dealer.

In one of our 2008 conversations he remarked: 'I cannot leave diamonds; even now, if asked, I could buy one-million-dollar stones in half an hour; the knowledge is still here'. But despite this assertion, Solo also made it clear to Sidibeh and myself that his time for adventure had come to an end: 'I do not travel much these days.' Not only had international border security become stricter and controls more difficult to evade, but the political connections that helped him to secure his life and activities both in the Gambia and abroad were gone. Thus, after a transnational life during which he had crossed countries, territories and cultures in a way that none of his nineteenth-century *jula* ancestors could ever have imagined, Solo grew old in his home country – a common experience for many of his generation's international migrants. Having prudently invested the proceeds of his activities in real estate, he had what he needed for a comfortable life that, although modest if compared to other periods of his life, was still out of reach for most Gambians. His children, most of whom lived in Europe or the United States, have been his major investment. Solo never went to school, but he soon understood the importance of literacy in the new world emerging out of de-colonization. In his early days as a diamond dealer he had to write his name over and over to learn how to sign his first cheque. Most of his children have studied abroad, and even the one who has chosen to follow in his father's footsteps and take up diamond dealing holds a master's degree from a London university. In 2008, when I met Solo, this son was thinking of opening up a gold mining site in Guinea, where he could count on Solo's relationship with Lansana Conté. That relationship had been established when Lansana Conté was serving Sékou Touré, and Solo was welcomed at the Guinea-Conakry presidential palace.

Conclusion

Through life histories one can study macrohistorical processes at the microhistorical level, fleshing out the aspirations, feelings and experiences of individual men and women at specific points in time and under broader sociocultural constraints (Thomson 1999; Fog Olwig 2007: 17). The rich details typical of this kind of evidence can trigger analyses in a plurality of diverging directions. In this chapter, I have focused on two aspects of Solo's trajectory. The first is his exemplary capacity for grasping the global opportunities created by the expansion of the diamond industry in the 1950s. Many of his countrymen tried to do the same, but few matched his success. The second is Solo's political engagement, in that his social trajectory serves as a summary of the highly personal relationships he

was able to establish with some of the major political personalities of twentieth-century Africa. Those connections were in part instrumental to his activities as a diamond dealer, but his engagement in home politics is also representative of the aspirations and commitment of an entire African generation that saw the end of colonial rule and actively participated in the creation and development of the new nations. Men of this generation keenly desired to be recognized as active members of their home communities but at the same time also had hopes for social and political change on a national scale. This held true also for Solo, in spite of the fact that his close association with notoriously corrupt, neopatrimonial regimes and his activities as diamond dealer may give the impression that his life trajectory was determined more by opportunities for economic gain than by any idealistic motivation.

Acknowledgements

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Notes

1. Gambian National Archive (GNA), Banjul, the Gambia, CSO 4/74, Consolidated African Selection Trust Ltd. Request for Legislation Preventing Illicit Diamond Trade (1938).
2. Solo Darboe, Bakau New Town, 24 November 2008.
3. Bakoyo and Omar Suso, Dippakunda, 16 October 2006.
4. National Archives of The Gambia, Banjul, CRU1-4, *Upper River Divisional Bulletin* 8 and 9 (1956).
5. Baba Suso, Fajikunda, 18 January 2008.
6. Literature of the 1950s and 1960s on African migrations commonly stresses the importance of economic factors, such as the need to pay colonial taxes (e.g. Skinner 1960). It also casts light on the cultural significance of migration. For instance, Jean Rouch's 1956 study of migrations from Niger to the Gold Coast concerns the mobility of youth labour as the expression of a long-rooted tradition of travel and the yearning for 'adventure'. According to Isaac Schapera (1947), the same aspirations underpinned Tswana colonial migrations. See also Bredeloup (2008) and Timera (2009).
7. 'I leave it with God' is a common Gambian expression that people use when they are mistreated in order to stress their forbearance and their faith in a higher form of justice.
8. Solo Darboe, Bakau New Town, 24 November 2008.
9. This Soninke, Bambara and Mandinka proverb is widespread not only in the Upper Gambia but also in eastern Senegal and Mali (Whitehouse 2007: 301; Whitehouse 2012).
10. Junkung Sumbundu, Koto Quarry, 29 November 2008.
11. Solo Darboe, Bakau New Town, 24 November 2008.
12. Omar Suso, Dippakunda, 19 December 2008.
13. Omar Suso, Dippakunda, 19 December 2008.
14. Solo Darboe, Bakau New Town, 24 November 2008.
15. Solo Darboe, Bakau New Town, 24 November 2008.
16. Gambian National Archives, Banjul, ARP 28/1, Travelling Commissioner's Report for December 1893.
17. Alusine Jalloh (2007) refers to Fula minorities in Sierra Leone. For other comparative analyses, see Meillassoux (1965) on the relationships between Bamako businessmen and the Malian-educated political and administrative elite; Morgenthau (1979) on the place of foreigners and multinationals in African national politics; and Diamond (1987) on private business's structural dependence on government assistance in the postcolonial African state.
18. Omar Suso was a *griot,* e.g. a praise-singer and oral historian. To make his point, he often used expressions drawn from Gambian oral traditions, such as this reference to honey and honey producer, which is a common way to stress the close relationship of two people.
19. Omar Suso, Dippakunda, 19 December 2008.
20. Solo Darboe, Bakau New Town, 24 November 2008.
21. Guinea-Conakry is a diamond-producing country on a level with Sierra Leone, but mining activities were nationalized by Sékou Touré in 1961 (Gberie 2011: 6–7). Although this reduced overall production, Sékou Touré continued to encourage illicit miners and smugglers (Greenhalgh 1985: 259; Morice 1987: 13; Bah 1990).

22. Solo Darboe, Bakau New Town, 25 November 2008.
23. For more details see 'Super Eagles: Senegambian Sensation': http://www.discogs.com/
    Super-Eagles-Senegambian-Sensation/release/3264679

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Chapter 15

Market Networks and Warfare

A Comparison of the Seventeenth-Century Blade Weapons Trade and the Nineteenth-Century Firearms Trade in Casamance

Peter Mark and José da Silva Horta

Introduction

Seaborne commerce between West Africa and Europe was first established in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries along the coast of Senegambia.[1] Within the northern reaches of 'Guiné do Cabo Verde', the Casamance region (south-western present-day Senegal) became an early focus for this commerce. The enduring structures of the burgeoning Atlantic trade were established there by the late sixteenth century. Among the lasting characteristics of Atlantic commerce was the importation of weapons from overseas. The early weapons trade, primarily in 'armas brancas' or steel swords and daggers, connected Casamance, through Senegambian trade networks, to a global web of production and commerce that extended not only to Europe but also to North Africa, the Indian Ocean and Spanish America.

The blade weapons trade expanded early in the seventeenth century, by which time it was tied inextricably to the slave trade; weapons figured significantly among the goods exchanged for captives. Two centuries later, as the Casamance entered the geopolitical orbits of France and England on the eve of the colonial period, the weapons trade again came to play a prominent role in overseas exchange with Europe. This time, however, it was not blade weapons but firearms that were imported into Casamance. Our chapter describes and compares the two stages in the weapons trade to the Casamance. Although the twentieth century lies outside the focus of our research, the observer may ironically wonder whether the contemporary independence struggle in the Casamance constitutes a third act in the importation of weapons to this beautiful but volatile land.

We will revisit Martin Klein's classic article, published in 1972 in *The Journal of African History* and entitled 'Social and Economic Factors in the Muslim Revolution in Senegambia'. Klein argued cogently that nineteenth-century legitimate commerce differed from the earlier slave trade in that goods imported into Senegambia were far more widely distributed than the earlier trade items. The result, he argued, was to foster a process of political change that ultimately challenged and then toppled the old warrior elite. He interpreted the ostensibly Islamic warfare of the mid and late nineteenth century as being a result of this more widespread dissemination of wealth from trade, including firearms.

Confirming Klein's main thesis, we raise new evidence to support it. Further, by taking a comparative approach we widen the context that led to transformations in the arms trade. These historical changes become thoroughly understandable when placed within their interregional and transnational context in different periods. We compare the spread of guns to the earlier (1590–1620 and later) spread of cavalry swords and daggers on the northern Upper Guinea Coast and, in smaller numbers, in southern Guiné do Cabo Verde. This blade weapons trade was almost wholly unknown before our recent research, published in our book *The Forgotten Diaspora.* In fact, the blade weapons trade was a crucial element facilitating the growing importance of cavalry in Senegambia. This historical development, in turn, helped to entrench the warrior elite whose decline Klein traces. (Another factor in the earlier rise of cavalry, the desiccation of coastal areas, is covered by George Brooks [1993] in his discussion of climate change.) So our research confirms the impact of trade on warfare. The inclusion of blade weapons in the early history of Senegambian warfare and trade makes the picture more complex. The model of a 'horse-slave cycle' followed by a 'gun-slave cycle' is not an accurate assessment of the role of Atlantic markets in the regional slave trade.[2] Not that another 'cycle' – of blade weapons – should be added: the chronology of blade arms extends into the late seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, contemporary with the introduction of guns in Senegambian markets. But blades could also be produced locally. Thus, African markets made their choices about when to take the opportunity to import 'armas brancas' from the Atlantic.

For the nineteenth century, besides revisiting Klein, we have uncovered new information on the traffic in firearms in the Casamance. Oral sources collected in 1975 by Mark, correlated with French archival records from c 1860, testify to the mid-nineteenth-century circulation of firearms from England and France in several Jola [Diola] communities of the Casamance. The presence of these weapons, even in limited numbers, in a northern Jola society characterized by small-scale polities attests that, as Klein argues, guns were more widely distributed than were the means of warfare in the earlier age of cavalry and blade weapons.

These developments are also connected, as happened throughout Guiné do Cabo Verde, with changes within Euro-African trade networks and the European presence. In 1886, the year that France acquired Ziguinchor and the territory

along the south bank of the Casamance River from Portugal, thereby marking the advent of French colonial power in the region, the people of northern Casamance successfully fought off a raid by the Manding warriors of Combo Sylla. This Jola victory was possible because several villages that were traditional enemies had allied with each other. The defeat of Sylla was also achieved because the local communities had amassed sufficient guns to defend themselves against mounted cavalrymen. This, too, clearly illustrates the accuracy of Klein's model.

Part I: The Seventeenth Century

Recently discovered sixteenth- and seventeenth-century archival documents of the Lisbon Inquisition illustrate the production of blade weapons, or 'armas brancas', by Lisbon-based artisans. These men worked with traders who, in turn, contracted for the swords. Many of these contractors were New Christians. Their work is documented for the thirty-year period from 1590 to 1618.[3] The weapons were transported to the rivers of Guinea, where they were traded to African elites.[4] After 1608, the approximately three dozen Jewish merchants who had settled on the Petite Côte became important players in this coastal commerce. In West Africa, the weapons were exchanged for slaves and other goods. This commerce in swords and daggers contravened a Papal Bull that prohibited Catholics from trading weapons to non-Christians. The commerce, largely ignored by historians,[5] is corroborated by Portuguese travel narratives from the period.

Both the production and the military use of 'armas brancas' – a name that refers to the white tinge of steel-bladed hand weapons – were highly developed in Portugal. These specialized arms came in many different forms. *Espadas* were double-edged, full-length swords wielded in the right hand. The more readily handled *terçados* (or *espadas curtas,* short swords), mentioned above, were ideal for cavalry use. Shorter arms took the form of *adagas* with a broad, short, pointed blade, generally with two cutting edges, and *punhais* with narrower, shorter blades.

In Lisbon in the second decade of the seventeenth century, a minimum of 300 swords but perhaps as many as 500 or 600 were produced annually for export to Upper Guinea. Over the period of eight or nine years documented by the Inquisition report of 1618, this trade would have totalled between 2,500 and 5,000 weapons.[6] The figures for the 1590s may have been slightly higher, as the Inquisition documents list eight artisans for that period.[7] Production of these weapons was truly an international activity. Only the assembly and decoration of the swords and scabbards took place in Lisbon. There, *espadeiros* or *barbeiros de espadas* assembled the finished weapons from blades that they imported from Italy and from Flanders. One type of sword, the *terçado,* was about 77 to 88 cm long.[8]

Weapons made in Europe were not the only ones to arrive on the northern Upper Guinea Coast. Documents discovered by Linda Newson and Susie Minchin

in the Archivio General de la Nación in Lima, Peru, document swords exported from India as part of the same worldwide network. In the African markets, these oriental weapons were even more highly valued than European-made weapons.[9]

As other European nations challenged Portugal's trading monopoly, the ban on selling weapons to non-Christians could not be enforced. Two of the competitors, England and the United Provinces, were not Catholic states. Their merchants ignored the Papal ban with impunity, as did French Huguenot privateers. Portuguese *lançados* and their Luso-African descendants who had settled among African populations on the West African mainland quickly entered into contact with the French, English and Dutch interlopers, providing them with African trade goods in return for weapons. There is evidence that as early as c 1590, Protestant 'pirates' (as the Portuguese refer to them) also brought blade weapons directly to Northern Senegal.[10]

Unsurprisingly, after the Inquisition discovered the Lisbon-based sword-trade network, an alternative had to be found to pursue this important trade. This alternative was the use of French ports to bring weapons from Portugal to the African markets. As early as c 1622 the former governor D. Francisco de Moura (1618–1622) stated in a memorial addressed to the king that

> As [the 'gentes da Nação'] were forbidden by the Contractor [of the Guinea trade] to bring from this Kingdom [Portugal] forbidden merchandise, not granting any ships licences to sail to Guinea, they pass this merchandise to France. From there they take the goods to the Coast (Petite Côte), trading more by this way than by the Kingdom, and they come from Cacheu to collect [the swords] and hide them in their houses.[11]

These short swords and daggers served primarily to arm cavalry. The horses were acquired from European merchants along the coast and, in the interior, from the 'Moors'. These Arab-Berber merchants may have been the commercial mediators between the coast and the Sahelian hinterland.[12] The European export of weapons to West Africa was actually part of a complex intercontinental and interregional traffic. The Atlantic trade complemented the caravan traffic across the southern Sahara, which provided horses from Arguim and across the Sahel (Austen 1993: 311–50). Yet even in the forested coastal zone to the south, blade weapons were highly in demand.

In the Casamance and in northern Guinea-Bissau, where the heavier forestation rendered cavalry ineffective, soldiers were armed with iron weapons and, when possible, *espadas*. In the Oporto manuscript of his *Tratado* (1594), Almada writes of the Cassangas of the Casamance, who were redoubtable warriors: 'In warfare they use spears, arrows, shields, knives, short swords like the Wolof, and the same clothing.'[13] In these southern regions in the late sixteenth century, short

swords would also have been used, in fewer numbers, by elite cavalry; infantry too used similar types of weapons. The fact that the late sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century accounts attest to the scarcity of horses in the kingdom of 'Casamança' (then called Kasa) – horses were imported only among the elite[14] – seems to confirm that small numbers of cavalry swords would have been used in Casamance.

In fact, the animals most frequently used for travel through the forested coastal region between the Casamance and Geba Rivers were not horses at all, but cattle. Almada offers several accounts of local rulers riding on bulls. 'The Kings of this land', he writes, 'occasionally ride about on horses, but most of the time they use bulls, if the journey is short.'[15] There are other references to royal use of horses among the Biafada peoples of present-day Guinea-Bissau.[16]

> From the Casamance to the Geba, the Blacks rarely rode on horses. A few 'Kings' and 'nobles' (*fidalgos,* individuals ranked high by lineage) did, but rarely. Most of the time they went about on cows or bulls, which in these parts they tame and pierce through the nose by means of which the animals wear rope similar to a bit, with which they guide the animals. And in this manner they can travel for several days and they have a very good ride; the same method is used among the Casangas, Banhuns, Buramos and Bijagós.[17]

South of the Rio Grande, in Nalu land, no horses were used or traded (Almada 1594 [1964]: 112). In Sierra Leone cavalry are only mentioned among the Manes, coming from the Mande savannah heartland. Nevertheless, even if cavalry was essentially absent in the forest zone, the use of short swords by infantry was not precluded. A later report, the 1663–1664 account of the Franciscan Friar André de Faro, may attest to the extension of the short swords market, referring to the abundance of '*traçados*' (*terçados*) in the 'Kingdom of the Banhuns (Bainuk)', namely in the port of Quinguim.[18]

In no known account from the late sixteenth to the late seventeenth century is there any mention of Felupe[19] use of short swords. Further south, blade weapons were found during this period among the Buramos/Papel and Biafada, as well as the 'Sapes' and Manes in the Guinea-Conakry and Sierra Leone regions, according to Almada (1594 [1964]: 69, 73, 132, 139), Jesuit sources (Brásio 1968: 393) and Franciscan sources (Brásio 1991: 242). The use of these weapons by both the Sapes and the Manes, who had moved into their territory in the mid-sixteenth century, could have implications for the historical reassessment of the Mane 'invasions'.[20] In fact, if the means of defence and destruction were not substantially different between the local Sapes and the Manes (Hair 1977: n. 169, 263)[21] coming from the Futa Jalon, the unbalanced relation between them, which changed the political map of Sierra Leone, must be found elsewhere. It

was based less on warfare technology than on tactics and military formation[22] as well as demographic factors between local societies that were politically more fragmentary, facing the Manes' migrations.

The role played in the region by a different type of weapons, guns, is attested by Francisco de Lemos Coelho's descriptions of 1669 and 1684. These accounts give information primarily from the 1650s and 1660s. Lemos Coelho reports that firearms were imported in the Gambia region and adds important references to the Casamance region:

> All of these above-named Kingdoms of the Banhuns, four in number outside of the Kasa Mansa, say that they were subjugated to the Kasa Mansa, and today they all live in liberty, they do not observe any religion, even if there is no lack of Manding who delude them with their cheating and the Falupos live in more barbarian manner and they have no communication with these people, and among them the Catholic religion could gain adherents and even more towards the south, the goods that are needed for these rivers are iron and kola and textiles and crystal and amber and spirits and powder and escopetas (short guns) and black, white and tile colour glass beads.[23]

Clearly, short guns (flintlock muskets) were only one among many desired trading items (Peres 1990). Iron was more in demand, as local blacksmiths could fashion it into both agricultural implements and blade weapons.

The crucial point is that the only local use of imported firearms in the Casamance region clearly evoked by Lemos Coelho is hunting: the Bainunk of the independent kingdom of Jasé considered themselves experts in shooting.[24] Nowhere does Coelho or the slightly earlier writing of Father André de Faro refer to the use of guns in warfare, although Europeans may have used them against the Africans. Blade weapons seem still to have been the main weapon. This would shortly change, however. John Thornton has gathered evidence that European muskets introduced in the armies of Casamance (and the Gambia) in the 1670s as infantry weapons were decisive in the Casamance king's defeat of an English naval attack (Thornton 1999: 45 and 12 n. 11–12). Be that as it may, the growing quest for firearms in connection with the growth of the Senegambian slave trade from the late seventeenth century onwards is asserted by Walter Rodney (1970) in *A History of the Upper Guinea Coast* and confirmed by Philip Curtin's (1975) statistics of gun imports.

Part II: The Nineteenth Century

Although there may have been some continuity of trade from the late seventeenth century (which we do not intend to study in this chapter), by the early

nineteenth century there were still relatively few firearms in Casamance. According to George Brooks, during the eighteenth century Diola groups began to exclude Europeans and Eurafricans from the waterways linking the Gambia, Casamance, Cacheu and Geba Rivers, thus forcing Portuguese and Luso-Africans to use sea passages in longer sailing routes between trading posts like Ziguinchor and Cacheu. The closing of the Senegal and Gambia Rivers to slave trade in 1809 and 1816 caused a redirection of caravans of African slave traders to Casamance and southwards, hence to the profit of Portuguese and Luso-African slave traders (though there is evidence that inland water routes south of the Casamance River were still used in the early nineteenth century). But Brooks does not mention weapons among the products of what he names the 'Cacheu-Casamance commercial sphere' between the 1780s and the 1810s. After 1816 these Luso-African traders' activities were more severely affected by French and Franco-Africans and English and Anglo-Africans who became either their competitors or collaborators (Brooks 2010: xviii, 4, 47ff., 161).

Firearms were acquired from the English trading post at Elinkin in the mouth of the Casamance River, near the island of Carabane. In 1836–37, however, French officials opened two trading posts in the Casamance. The fort they constructed at Sedhiou, relatively far east in 'Moyen Casamance', followed the old Portuguese and Luso-African model of establishing trading *escales* at the point where the westward-flowing rivers became impassable for any but the smallest draft vessels. The other trading post was on Carabane Island, near the mouth of the river. There, as Mark (1985: 56) wrote, 'Within months of the opening of the new comptoir, Diolas from both banks of the river were coming to exchange quantities of rice and wax for guns, textiles, iron, copper, and other items'.

This provided the local populations in the lower river with a second source of firearms. Previously, they had purchased guns from the English trading post established early in the century at Elinkin. An undated report that is apparently from 1850 states that Lower Casamance villages were armed with 'guns, which they acquire from the English.'[25] The French official in the region, E. Bertrand-Bocandé, wrote that year that Elinkin (the etymology comes from 'Lincoln') was still 'un hameau anglais'['an English hamlet'].[26] During his visit to Thionk-Essyl, the largest community in the region of Djougoutes, Bertrand-Bocandé estimated that 800 to 1,000 men of this village cluster were armed with guns.[27]

By mid-century, some northern Jola were travelling to English Combo (in the Gambia) to obtain trade goods, most likely including weapons. These the Jolas acquired in exchange for captives and cattle,[28] but also and primarily for rice, their staple crop and the basis of their financial transactions (Mark 1985: 64).

With the establishment of a French trading post at Carabane, people from Djougoutes – a heavily populated plateau north of the Casamance River – travelled to Carabane to work as labourers and sell cattle, some of which they had stolen from neighbouring communities. Early on, a preference for English fire-

arms incised with the brand name Tower persisted, but eventually the Jola also procured weapons from the French. Brooks (2010: 172) observes that a French company employed Franco-Africans as 'compradors' to navigate pirogues along the Casamance River and its tributaries specifically selling English Tower muskets, 'because Africans disdained French models'. Gunpowder, musket balls and flints as well as sabres were also exchanged for local products such as rice, beeswax and hides. Rice often served as the unit of exchange value.

Early in 1860 the colonial authorities in Dakar sent a military force of eight hundred men under Pinet-Laprade on a punitive expedition against Thionk-Essyl. The men of Thionk had earned a reputation as pirates and had recently captured and held for ransom the wife and young child of Bertrand-Bocandé, the 'resident' at Carabane. When the French met the men from Thionk in battle, some of the Diola forces were armed with guns, others with lances and shields. Thionk-Essyl sustained losses of 40 dead and 200 cattle; the French forces suffered no fatalities. Thionk was then, as it remains today, the largest community in Djougoutes (now called Buluf). Yet the weapons at its disposal, and the fact that many of the men were armed with spears and hippopotamus-skin shields, left them unable to offer meaningful resistance to a modern military force.

In his post-expedition report Pinet-Laprade wrote, evidently speaking of the eighteen or twenty villages grouped along the edge of Djougouttes Plateau, 'These villages have a general population of 18,000 inhabitants and 3,000 firearms.' It is not clear how Pinet-Laprade arrived at his estimate of 3,000 guns, especially in view of the fact that he did not visit all of the villages. But, given that his estimate of the population – 18,000 – is in line with late nineteenth-century estimates (in 1960 the population was over 40,000; today, urban migration and ongoing civil war have probably decreased this number), and crediting Pinet-Laprade with similar accuracy for the weapons census, it appears a considerable quantity of firearms were already dispersed through Buluf. Nevertheless, the 'Floups' had nowhere near sufficient firepower to protect themselves from the French.

A generation later, the situation was radically transformed by the influx of thousands of weapons, quite clearly associated with growth in the production of wild rubber and palm produce throughout the Casamance. Jola men sold these forest products in Bathurst or at Carabane. By the 1880s, palm kernels and palm oil, along with wild rubber, provided a regular, if small, source of income for the people of the Casamance. By 1880, seasonal migration to the Gambia to collect palm produce was giving the people of Djougoutes regular access to English goods, including weapons (Mark 1976: 341–61). The proximity of the Gambian border, easily accessible by pirogue, meant that the Jola of Djougoutes had their choice of either French (at Carabane) or English goods. Hence, their geographical situation and their earlier trading links gave them increased access to interregional and international markets. One result of this labour migration and the associated influx of consumer goods was that within a few years, the peo-

ple of Djougoutes were able to defend themselves effectively against the recurrent attacks of Muslim slave raiders, most notably Fodé Sylla and Brahim NDiaye.

In Djougoutes in 1886, the men of several villages came together and inflicted a crushing defeat on the Mandinka warlord and slave trader Fodé Sylla (also known as Combo Sylla). The Jola victory is recorded both in contemporary French reports preserved in the Senegalese archives, and in local oral traditions in Boulouf. In 1975, when Mark interviewed the elders in several of the villages that had united to defeat Sylla, the oldest of these informants had been born a decade after the battle. The men stopped the conversation to sing; the verse was about the battle. They then recounted that 'we captured a horse belonging to one of Sylla's horsemen.' (They also captured his war drum, which they keep to this day.) 'Until then we had thought that horse and rider were one frightful beast.'[interview with the elders of Thionk-Essyl,Batine, including Cheikh Abba Badji, March 1975.] These men were reciting songs they had learned at their own initiation in 1919, but the initiation songs had 'belonged' to their grandfathers, who were themselves the victorious soldiers.

The same oral traditions also preserve a memory of the importance of firearms. When Jola living in the village of Kartiak observed Sylla's preparations for his attack, they gave the pre-arranged alarm – the firing of their guns – to the neighbouring villages. Warriors from the other villages arrived in time to ensure the Jola victory. This oral tradition is confirmed, at least in part, by an 1888 report written by the 'Administrateur Supérieur' of the Casamance:

> Sylla attacked the people of Djougoutes … but they resisted courageously and repulsed him … of Sylla's forces, only nine managed to escape and the Jola are said to have captured 45 horses. This fact is highly significant as what had always facilitated the trouble-makers' success was the fear that the Jola had of horses; if they are no longer afraid, they will certainly defend themselves even more successfully.[29]

The Jolas of Djougoutes prevailed. What contributed significantly to their victory, besides the alliance among several villages that traditionally were at odds with each other, was the wide distribution of firearms by the 1880s, which enabled the Jola to effectively form a local militia. Klein's thesis is supported by the nineteenth-century history of the northern Casamance.

Conclusion

The Casamance region of southern Senegal was an important part of the Portuguese commercial sphere in Greater Senegambia as early as the mid-fifteenth century. By the mid-sixteenth century it had become an important focus of the nascent Atlantic system. As such it was linked to a global economy that reached

from Portugal to Brazil to India. The resulting commerce brought the Casamance a wide range of goods, including, by the last two decades of the sixteenth century, blade weapons. Access to these weapons, however, was limited to those who controlled the export trade in slaves. Hence, the distribution of the imported blade weapons was limited to, or at least controlled by, the local rulers who dominated the 'production' of slaves for export.

It is important to point out that in the Casamance, the focus of our investigation, cavalry never played a central role in warfare. From the seventeenth century, blade weapons (but not horses) were valued trade imports – as was iron, for local blacksmiths were able to craft new swords from iron bars. In this geographical area there was no warrior elite consisting of cavalry, nor – with the possible exception of the sixteenth-century Kassanké ruler named Massatamba – did local rulers maintain the means to raise and support fighting forces of horsemen. Rather, weapons were distributed broadly through the population, at least among those who had access to trade goods – beeswax early on, rice and hides, but also captives. Three centuries later, the situation differed substantially. Again, international trading networks brought access to weapons, but by the 1880s at the latest, palm produce and rubber had replaced the earlier primary exports of wax and probably rice. These forest products could be collected and sold by households or even by individuals. The main transformation to follow the growth of this trade was the widening of access to imported trade goods, including firearms. A village armed with guns could stave off slave raiders and maintain local communities' independence.

What was similar between the two contexts, and what changed? In both cases the arms came from abroad, not from an African market, although for seventeenth-century Casamance we are not sure how many blade weapons arrived through the Atlantic trade and how many were made locally. Nevertheless, unlike the trade in blade weapons, the import of firearms represented access to weapons that local technology was not readily able to appropriate and reproduce.

Paradoxically, a mid-nineteenth-century protocolonial European implantation by the French gave Felupe/Jola access to a means of defence against both European and African (Mande) offensives. Between 1600 and 1800 the Casamance had gone from being a central focus of the Portuguese coastal commercial network to being only on its periphery. This loss of importance was due in part to the Luso-African network's increasing inability to compete with Franco-Africans and Anglo-Africans. Unable as well to supply weapons to all of the Casamance from its local 'escale' at Ziguinchor, the Luso-African network lost its paramount role among the local Felupe/Jola.

In contrast to the earlier period of centralized trade, this latter commerce was more widely distributed among the population. Whereas the earlier swords were concentrated in the possession of wealthy and powerful individuals – for exam-

ple, the King of Bussis in what is now Guinea-Bissau – the nineteenth-century trade placed guns in the hands of individuals. At first sight this change looks like either a factor or a result of the remarkably egalitarian society that characterized the Jola of Djougoutes/Boulouf at the beginning of the colonial period. However, rather than mechanically linking social organizational factors to warfare technology,[30] this chapter has raised evidence to support the major role played by the market-based transformation in access to weapons that ultimately resulted from African purchasers' choices. In either case, and despite the differences between the seventeenth- and the nineteenth-century long-distance commerce affecting the Casamance, the weapons trade played an important role in connecting regional trade networks with wider, interregional and transnational commerce.

This chapter has offered a diachronic comparative approach to the weapons trade in a single region, the Casamance, or northern Guiné do Cabo Verde. This methodological choice enabled us to show the relevance of differential access to various kinds of weapons in different historical contexts. This comparative approach includes in the equation an important blade weapons trade that we have recently discovered. We compare this early period to the subsequent African consumption of guns in the Casamance, following the comprehensive perspective taken in recent historiography of African warfare (Thornton 1999). The shift from swords to guns seems to correspond to more than a technological change. It reflects, not the decline of Portuguese influence and the rise of French and British influence in the region, but rather, a shift in African market conditions.

This exercise in comparative history, based both on written sources and oral traditions, demonstrates that the major transformation in arms commerce in the Casamance region from the early seventeenth through the mid-nineteenth century took the form of replacing limited acquisition of blade weapons ('armas brancas') with more widespread access to firearms in local communities. This enabled the communities to resist the attacks of nineteenth-century slave warriors and to maintain their autonomy. Paradoxically, this change was related to a new, protocolonial power, specifically the growing European presence in the region, in a new transnational historical context.

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Notes

1. In this chapter we use the concept of Senegambia as meaning Greater Senegambia (which can be identified with the Portuguese concept of 'Guiné do Cabo Verde'). See Boubacar Barry (1988), as reformulated and developed by Horta and Mark (2007 [2010]) and Eduardo Costa Dias and Horta (2007 [2010])

2. This 'cycle' model has been critically reassessed by John K. Thornton (1999: 5–6). For a full discussion of African warfare factors in perspective and in several Atlantic regions, also see Thornton (1999).

3. Arquivo Nacional da Torre do Tombo (Hereafter ANTT), Inquisição de Lisboa, Livro 194, folios 159–160v; Livro 208 fol. 640–644v. We are deeply grateful to Florbela Frade for having called our attention to the second reference and to Miguel Sanches de Baena for sharing with us his expertise on weapons and weapons production history. For a more detailed account of this trade see Mark and Horta (2011: chap. 4).

4. In the same period an indeterminate number of swords assembled in Lisbon were also going to Angola (see Marques 2009), but the Inquisidores' attention was focused on the weapons sent to the Upper Guinea Coast.

5. Philip Curtin (1975) lists swords and cutlasses among the Senegambian imports from the 1680s to 1730s. Walter Rodney (1970) also makes reference to the importance of blade weapons among other merchandize traded by Luso-Africans. Although the earliest reference he gives is the 1669 account of Lemos Coelho, this trade developed much earlier.

6. Not all of the sword makers or *barbeiros de espadas* named by one of them, Gaspar Cardoso, were involved in the trade for the entire eight or nine years. In addition, one of the men is reported to have produced only 18 swords, and two others 20 or 30 per year; another man made 40 per year. This renders any estimation of the total number of weapons exported quite approximate.

7. The complete list of names engaged in sword production for the Guinea market in 1590 is: Espinosa, Domingos Jorge, Francisco Álvares, Alexo Brás, Nuno Camelo, António Fernandes, Simão Carvalho and Manuel Teixeira. See ANTT, Inquisição de Lisboa, livro 194, fls. 59–60.

8. ANTT, Inquisição de Lisboa, Livro 203, fol. 643v: 'perguntado que terçados cujos quantos são disse que são espadas larguas de quatro palmos pouco mais ou menos humas voltas (curved) e outras direitas que coustumão vir de Frandes e de Veneza, e aqui se guoarnessem com cabos d'estanho.'

9. Archivo General de la Nación, Lima; Leg. 34; 1578–1624; Nueva signatura; SO-CO Ca 2; Do 8; Año 1573 F 1014v: 'cargazones llevadas a Cacheu, en el Nuestra Señora del Vencimiento y San Juan Bautista, a cargo de Manoel Batista Peres; fecha August 15–26 November 1616. We wish to thank Linda Newson and Susie Minchin for making this document available to us.

10. See Blanco (n.d. [1990]) for a translated edition of the 'Instrucion que A. V. Magestad se da, para mandar fortificar el mar Oceano, y defender se de todos los contrarios Piratas, ansi Franceses, como Ingleses, en todas las nauegaciones de su Real Corona dentro de los Tropiccos'.

11. 'Porque prohibindolhes o Contratador leuarem deste Reino fazendas defezas, e naõ dando licença a alguns nauios para irem a Guiné, as passaõ a França e dahi as leuaõ á dita Costa, comerceando mais nella por aquella via que pella deste Reino, e de Cacheu as vaõ buscar para as recolherem em suas cazas', D. Francisco de Moura, 'Lembranças e advertencias' (Brásio 1968: 698–700).

12. Almada's account of c 1596 makes clear that there was an association between the horse trade and the cavalry expertise taught to the Wolof courts by these merchants. André Álvares de Almada, untitled abridged version of his *Tratado Breve dos Rios de Guiné do Cabo Verde*: Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal (BNP, Lisbon), codex 525, fol. 7v.

13. 'Usam nas guerras azagaias, frechas, adargas, facas, espadas curtas como os Jalofos e os mesmos vestidos' (Almada 1594 [1964]: 69).

14. '… usam cavalos, mas poucos, porque alguns que têm se levam da Ilha do Cabo Verde, ou da terra dos Jalofos ou Mandingas' (They use horses but a few, because some are taken from the island of Cabo Verde [Santiago] and others from the lands of Wolof and Mandinka) (Almada 1594 [1964]: 63).

15. 'Cavalgam os Reis desta terra algumas vezes em cavalos, e as mais das vezes em bois, sendo a jornada perto' (ibid.: 68).

16. Ibid.: 95. At that time, the horses came from inland networks, such as from the Geba basin.

17. 'Os mais dos negros, de Casamança até este Rio, … usam pouco cavalgarem cavalos; alguns Reis e fidalgos o fazem, mas poucas vezes: a mais das vezes é em vacas e bois, que para isso têm mansos, com as ventas furadas, nas quais trazem uns cordeis ao modo de freio, com que os governam. E andam muitas jornadas e têm muito bom passeio; o mesmo usam Casangas, Banhuns, Buramos, Bijagós' (ibid.: 98).

18. '… se leuantarão quanti(da)de de gentios com armas contra hum dos dittos mercadores soubre duuidas de seos negosios: aos gritos, e brados, acodimos os Religiozos a ver se podiamos aquietar e apaziguar a briga, hera tão grande a furia dos gentios, e tantos os tracados (sic for traçados, i.e. treçados or terçados, short swords), flexas (frechas) e azagaias, q̃ cahirão soubre os portuguezes e soubre nos, q̃ todos estiuemos arriscados a mortte.' Friar André de Faro, in A. Brásio (1992: 192–93): 'a large number of men rose up with arms against one of these merchants, because they doubted his trade [i.e. his honesty] screaming and shouting and we, the friars intervened, to see if we could calm and pacify the situation, (but) so great was their anger and they had so many terçados and frechas and spears, that they raised against the Portuguese and against us, that we felt we all risked being killed'.

19. Felupe (fem. Felupa; Eng: Floop), a term used as early as the sixteenth century, is the label corresponding most closely to the ancestors of the Jola (Diola; Joola) peoples.

20. A change in the dominant political power in the Serra Leoa region in the mid-sixteenth century was characterized by Mane migrations followed by military actions. Nevertheless, the image of Mane invasions destroying the indigenous coastal Sapes societies was a Por-

tuguese and Luso-African interpretation of local oral traditions. As Horta (2011: 308–10) has shown by confronting Almada's Oporto ms. (and Lisbon ms.) with the abridged version in the BNP codex 525, Mane polities attacked coastal Sapes to get tribute when the tribute was not paid. Although there was a first moment of political change by military force, no destruction of the local societies whom Portuguese writers called 'Sapes' took place. This is confirmed by Almada's representation of a fusion of cultures as well as an example of continuity of previous Temné royal lineages, described by André Donelha (Horta 2007: 410–11). Furthermore, Sapes' material culture was not destroyed, as Mark has shown in his revision of the dating of Sapes or Luso-African ivories (Mark and Horta 2011: chap. 5). For a different perspective on the effects of Mane invasion, see Green (2012). Green is correct to point to a rise in Sapes captives in the Atlantic trade as evidence of fighting. Such fighting does not, however, imply the destruction of Sapes society. Indeed, Manuel Álvares, writing in 1615, clearly indicated that Sapes society survived – at least in part – the incursions of the Manes (Mark 2007: 189–211).

21. According to Hair: 'At the beginning of the sixteenth century, it was stated that the Sape used daggers called *adibes* and swords called *adibe sabane,* that is "large dagger" (Fernandes, f. 125). Cf. Temne *athis abana* "knife big" (indef.), or Landuma *atis* "knife". Many of the items of vernacular vocabulary quoted by the Portuguese and stated to be associated with the Mane turn out to be "Sape". Possibly this indicates that the informants were "Sape" — i.e. Temne-speaking. But it also suggests that there may have been much less cultural discontinuity as a result of the Mane invasions than is argued by Rodney' (Hair 1970: 60-68).

22. On Mane tactics and military formation see Thornton (1999: 46).

23. '… todos estes Reinos dos Banhús que tenho nomeado que são quatro fora de Caçamança dizem forão subgeitos ao de Caçamança, hoje vivem todos em sua liberdade, não observão religião nenhuma, se bem que não faltão mandingas que os enganão com seus embustes, e mais barbaramente vivem os Falupos que não tem communicação com esta gente, e aqui já se pode fazer muito fruto na religião catholica, e quanto mais para o sul mais, os generos que são necessarios para estes rios he ferro, colla, roupa, christal, alambre agua ardente, polvora, escopetas**,** e avelorio preto, branco, e côr de telha' (Peres 1990: 1–88, 32). See also Francisco de Lemos Coelho, *Descripção da Costa da Guiné* desde o cabo Verde athe Serra Lioa com Todas Ilhas e Rios que os Brancos Navegão Feita por (…) no Anno de 1669: Biblioteca Nacional de Portugal /Lisbon (BNL), Res. Cód. 319.

24. See Lemos Coelho (1684), 'Discripção da Costa de Guiné e situação de todos os portos, e rios della; e roteyro para se poderem navegar todos seus rios', BNL, Cód. 454, in Peres (1990: 89–250, 143).

25. Archives Nationales du Sénégal (hereafter ANS) 13G 361 1.

26. ANS 1G 23, 'Rapport de M. Bertrand-Bocandé April 10, 1850'.

27. ANS 13G 361 1.

28. Ibid.

29. ANS 13H 462 2, 17 July 1888, 'Administrateur Supérieur de la Casamance au Gouverneur du Senégal. (The correct date is undoubtedly 1886.) 'Sylla … a attaqué les Djougoutes … mais les Djougoutes ont bravement resisté, l'ont repoussé, (des) hommes de Sylla, neuf seulement auraient pu échapper, et (les Jolas) auraient pris 45 chevaux. Ce fait d'avoir pris des chevaux a un grand importance, car, ce qui avait toujours fait le success des perturbateurs, était la crainte que les Yolas avaient des chevaux; s'ils n'en ont plus peur, ils se defendront certainement avec avantage'.

30. For a development of this discussion see Thornton (1999).

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